

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to implement the interim recommendations of the Cauvery Commission?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) to (c) A meeting of the Chief Ministers of the Cauvery basin States/U.T. was convened on 30.09.1997 to understand the view points of all the basin States/U.T. for working out a scheme which is by and large generally acceptable to all States/U.T. and which at the same time ensures implementation of the orders of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal. The meeting was attended by the Irrigation/other concerned Ministers and senior officers to the Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu States and Union Territory of Pondicherry.

The participants expressed their view points in the meeting. Whereas the States of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Union Territory of Pondicherry generally agreed to the draft scheme prepared by the central Government with some changes, the State of Karnataka strongly opposed the scheme and suggested constituting a co-ordination Committee instead.

The scheme is being finalised keeping in the view points of all the Basin States/Union Territory to the extent possible. After the scheme is notified it will be placed before both the Houses of the Parliament in accordance with Sub-section (7) of Section 6A of the Inter State Water Disputes Act, 1956.

Misuse of Prepaid Cards in Cellphones Alarms Cops

*78. SHRI MRUTYUNJAYA NAYAK:

SHRIMATI BHAVNABEN DEVRAJBHI
CHIKHALIA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Misuse of prepaid cards in cellphones alarms cops" appearing in the Hindustan Times, dated the October 17, 1997;

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

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto;

(d) whether Government are also aware of the inherent dangers in the use of cellphone which is working as parallel wireless system threatening the internal and external security; and

(e) if so, the remedial measures Government contemplate to take to frustrate the misuse of cellphone, intercept such calls and apprehend such callers as they threaten the security?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government of Maharashtra has brought to the notice of the Govt. of India, the misuse of prepaid SIM cards by underworld

gangs in Mumbai.

(c) The Government have taken up the matter with all the eight Cellular Mobile Telephone Service operators in the four metro cities including Mumbai, to strictly carry out verification of subscribers, identity. They have also been directed to maintain proper record of all subscribers to whom the service is provided by them.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. The Government is aware of the security implications of Cellular service. The licence for the operation of the Cellular Service is governed by the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885. Section 5 to the Act makes it obligatory for the cellular operators to provide necessary facilities for interception of messages passing through their networks.

[Translation]

Sinking of Indian Goods Vessel

*79. SHRI BHIMRAO VISHNUJI BADADE:

SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that an India goods vessel has sunk in the coastal belt of Malacca region;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of crew rescued and crew members missing in that accident;

(d) the number of Indian crew members missing out of them;

(e) whether due compensation has been paid to the next Kith and Kin of the Indians who died due to the collision of the ship;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the steps taken by the Government to avoid such accidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT SHRI T. G. VENKATARAMAN): (a) to (d) There was a collision between ICL Vikraman, an Indian registered ship, belonging to India Cements Limited, Chennai and mv Mount-I of St Vincent flag on 26-9-97. As a result ICL Vikraman sank with the cargo. 29 of the 34 Indian crew members and officers including Master of ICL Vikraman are feared to have lost their lives. Remaining 5 crew members have been rescued and repatriated to India. An enquiry conducted by the Director General of Shipping, Mumbai has revealed that the mishap took place because of non-compliance of International Regulations for Prevention of Collision 1972, delayed manoeuvring, confusion due to use of VHF in restricted visibility and wrong manoeuvre at close proximity.

(e) and (f) The owners of the vessel have deposited with the commissioner for Workmens' Compensation, Mumbai & Chennai and Shipping Master, Mumbai requisite amounts towards death compensation, loss of baggage and balance of wages and salaries of crew members & the officers.

(g) Govt. have granted permission to DG(S) to initiate enquiry proceeding against Capt. A.P. Gonahalekar, Master of mv Mount-I under Section 363 of Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 for violating International Regulations for Prevention of Collision 1972. A Merchant Shipping Notice is also being issued to all Ship Masters by the Directorate General of Shipping, Mumbai bringing out the dangers involving in the use of VHF chennal in restricted visibility.

Practice of Sati

*80. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the cases of sati which came to light in the country since Independence;

(b) whether those responsible for this crime have been prosecuted;

(c) if so, the judgement given in each case;

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto;

(e) whether the Government propose to formulate a strict legislation in order to completely ban the practice of Sati;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S. R. BOMMAI): (a) to (g) The National Crime Records Bureau has information only as to the number of cases reported under the Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987 during 1989 to 1996, which is as under:

Sl. No.	Year	Cases reported
1.	1989	36
2.	1990	52
3.	1991	17
4.	1992	1
5.	1993	5
6.	1994	2
7.	*1995	2
8.	1996	10

*Figures from Bihar, Rajasthan, and Daman & Diu are upto May, October and November, 1995 respectively.

(e) and (f) The Government has enacted the Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987 to provide for effective prevention of the Commission of Sati and its glorification.

(g) Does not arise.

[English]

National Plastics Waste Management Task Force

679. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have since considered the recommendation of the National Plastics Waste Management Task Force that as more than 60 percent of the plastics generated in the country goes in for material recycling, a ban may be imposed on dirty coloured carry bags; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Task Force has recommended the ban on the manufacture of dirty coloured carry bags with visible contamination. However, the Task Force has also observed that over 60% of the plastics waste generated in the country goes in for material recycling. The Ministry of Environment and Forests has constituted an Implementation and Monitoring Committee to oversee the progress and follow-up of the recommendations of the Task Force.

Forest Cover in the Country

680. SHRI KESHAB MAHANTA:

SHRI A. G. S. RAM BABU:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of forest cover in the country State-wise;

(b) the reasons for reduction in the forest cover; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to increase the land under forest cover?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) As per the State of Forest Report, 1995, the forest cover in the country is 639,600 sq. km.i.e. 19.46% of the geographical area. The State-wise details of forest cover is given in the Statement.

(b) The main reasons for reduction in forest cover can be attributed to wide gap in demand and supply of fuelwood, fodder & timber, due to rapid increase in population resulting in unsustainable withdrawals, damage due to shifting cultivation, forest fires, grazing and also due to diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes.

(c) The various steps proposed to be taken to increase the land under forest cover are: