

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3987
ANSWERED ON:30.04.2012
CHECK ON SMUGGLING OF RED SANDALWOOD
Owaisi Shri Asaduddin

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

- (a) whether the smuggling of various important trees such as red sandalwood are rampant in the country;
- (b) if so, the details of the cases reported alongwith the value of trees smuggled during the last three years, year-wise, State-wise and the reasons therefor;
- (c) the persons found guilty and action taken against them during the last three years, year-wise and State-wise; and
- (d) the steps taken by the Government to check smuggling of red sandalwood trees in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATRAJAN)

(a) No, Sir.

(b) & (c) However, sporadic cases of illegal felling and transport of Red Sandalwood (Red Sanders) have been reported which are dealt with as per Law. Red Sanders is naturally found in some parts of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Red Sanders is also present in plantations done by forest department in these States. Wood of Red Sanders is in demand especially in East Asian countries like China and Japan and fetches high price, which is one of the important reasons for smuggling and all efforts are being made to prevent smuggling.

Details of seizure of Red Sanders in various States are given in the annexure.

(d) Protection of forests is the main responsibility of the State Governments. State Forest Departments control illegal felling and smuggling of Red Sanders through patrolling in the forest area by forest personnel, establishment of base camps in vulnerable areas, deployment of strike forces, involvement of Forest Protection Committees, search and seizure of illegal material and vehicles, and prosecution of people involved in smuggling of Red Sanders. Central agencies like Customs and Directorate of Revenue intelligence have also seized Red Sanders wood at ports and other locations in the country, since export of Red Sanders wood is prohibited.