

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:542
ANSWERED ON:05.05.2015
SMUGGLING OF TIMBER AND SANDALWOOD
Verma Shri Rajesh

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of rampant smuggling of timber/sandalwood and illegal felling of valuable species of trees in the country and if so, the details thereof, State-wise;
- (b) the loss of revenue along with the number of persons apprehended/convicted during the last three years on account of above illegal activities;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to formulate policy measures/strategies at the National level to prevent/curb the said activities and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government also proposes to grant permission to forest officials to carry arms and use additional force to safeguard the wildlife and forest wealth; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof along with the steps being taken in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (e) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 542 BY SHRI RAJESH VERMA REGARDING "SMUGGLING OF TIMBER AND SANDALWOOD" DUE FOR REPLY ON 05.05.2015

(a) and (b) Protection and Management of Forests is primarily the responsibility of the concerned State/UT Government and hence the action to tackle illegal felling of trees is taken as per the provisions of various acts such as Indian Forest Act, 1927; Wildlife Protection Act, 1972; Forest Conservation Act, 1980 and various state specific rules & regulations thereof. The details of the report received from some of the States are given in Annexure-I.

(c) There are Central laws namely Indian Forest Act, 1927; Wildlife Protection Act, 1972; Forest Conservation Act, 1980, Biodiversity Act, 2002. Further, the respective State/UT Governments have State specific Acts/Rules and Regulations. Central Government is open to considering suggestions to strengthen relevant provisions in these acts or policy to curb illegal felling and trade of valuable timber species like Sandalwood/Red Sander.

(d) & (e) In most of the States the forest officers carry arms and use additional force to safeguard the wildlife & forest wealth. The forest personnel do take the help of armed police forces from the police in case of necessity to prevent forest & wildlife crimes.