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Title: Need to include red sandalwood in Schedule VI of the Wildlife Act.

SHRI M. VENUGOPALA REDDY (NARASARAOPET): There is a need to protect red sandal wood by including it in the Schedule VI to the Wildlife Act by notifying it as a specific plant.

I would like to state that sandalwood smugglers in forest areas are illegally cutting the sandalwood trees by threatening the tribals residing in the scheduled areas. Illegal cutting of the trees is taking place in Araku, Tirupati, Khammam and other areas in Andhra Pradesh. There is a huge demand of sandalwood from China, Europe and Japan. The smugglers are using the shipyards to export sandalwood, which is fetching Rs.1 lakh per kg. Recently, the Government has conducted raids and impounded red sandalwood worth Rs.120 crore in one month. Poor people are becoming victims in the hands of smugglers to earn more money in less time. Most of the smuggling is taking place from Seshachalam, Palakondalu and they are entering Chittoor, Kadapa, Kurnool, Prakasam districts of Andhra Pradesh and other State also. Smugglers are using ambulances, coming to Tirupati in the name of pilgrimages, and are using other tactics to smuggle from one State to other and are exporting these in the name of foodgrains to Nepal and other neighbouring countries. The Wildlife Act need to stop illegal cutting and smuggling of red sandal wood. Hence, there is a need to review such Acts to protect the national assets like Red Sandalwood.

Hence, I request the Hon'ble Minister for Environment & Forests, through the Chair, to kindly pursue inclusion of Sandalwood/Red Sanders in Schedule VI to the Wildlife Act.