

In total during 1995-96 Rs. 28 crore 89 lakh and in 1996-97 Rs. 31 crore 67 lakh were given as subsidy for this purpose. These two Union territories are included therein.

SHRIMATI BHAVNABEN DEVRAJ BHAJ CHIKHALIA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not find the reply given to the question of Shrimati Sheela Gautam complete. Just now you have told that this scheme is in vogue since 1.8.75. Do you not find it necessary to revise this scheme which has been introduced 22 years back in 1975. What will be its impact on other states. In the last paragraph it has stated that except it, neither any such scheme for providing subsidy for transportation of foodgrain for PDS is being implemented nor is under consideration. Sir, through you I would like to know as to whether any such scheme is proposed to be taken up now after 21 or 22 years.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : The purpose of this scheme was to provide essential commodities at cheaper rates in all the hilly states. The Government of India is bearing this expenditure for providing foodgrains like rice and wheat to hilly population which is deprived of this facility. The hon. Member has asked whether proposal of any such scheme is under consideration. You can give it in writing, while reading the reply I also felt that hilly states have been covered under it but the hilly areas ... (Interruptions)

SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM : Whether it is Uttar Pradesh.

SHRIMATI BHAVNABEN DEVRAJ BHAJ CHIKHALIA : Do you propose to formulate any such scheme for hilly areas.

MR. SPEAKER : He is saying that.

[English]

He is going to give a good reply.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : I would like to make a submission that I felt that these hilly areas may be left due to financial constraints. This Government is committed to welfare of poor therefore I would like to say that a survey will be conducted for this purpose for the remaining hilly areas and it will be reviewed.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Very good. After this I do not think that there is any supplementary left. I will go to the next Question No. 143.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : What more can be asked after such a good reply.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : No, no. He has said that he was going to consider the other areas also. What else is left ?

[Translation]

SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Speaker...

MR. SPEAKER : You should give notice for it.

[English]

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Sir, please give me a chance. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Prof. Kurien, I have gone to the next question. You have also been a Minister earlier.

...(Interruptions)

Seizure of Sal and Teak Wood

*143. SHRI JANG BAHADUR SINGH PATEL : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the U.P. Forest Department had got crores of rupees worth of Khair, Sal and Teak wood seized from Haryana, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and some other major towns in the state sometime in the past;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government in the matter;

(c) whether the Supreme Court has recently banned the cutting of trees in the forests all over the country; and

(d) if so, the measures proposed to be taken to implement the Court's order in all the States ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) Yes sir, The Uttar Pradesh Forest Department has seized Khair, Sal and other miscellaneous timber from districts bordering Haryana and Delhi in May—June 1996.

(b) In all, about 76 cubic metre Khair, and a small quantity of Sal and miscellaneous wood was recovered. The market value of the seized material is estimated around Rs. 12,47,700. Two cases have been sent to court as the offenders refused to get the case compounded.

(c) Yes Sir, The Supreme Court in their interim order of 12.12.96 has suspended felling of trees in forests, except in accordance with Working Plans, duly approved by Central Government.

(d) Central Government have advised the States/UTs to strictly comply with the orders of the Supreme Court.

[Translation]

SHRI JANG BAHADUR SINGH PATEL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, forest mafia of Nepal is also involved in unauthorised felling of trees especially in terai region of Nepal. Uttar

Pradesh Government has submitted a proposal worth Rs. 12.17 crore for setting up watch towers for forest guards and providing them sophisticated weapons. Hon. Minister has given a reply that instructions have been issued for following the orders of the Supreme Court strictly. Nothing has been mentioned regarding the proposal sent by the U.P. Government to Nepal Government after holding a dialogue for making this arrangement especially for checking the unauthorised felling of trees in border and terai region. I would like to know about it from the hon. Minister.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the security of forests has posed a challenge before the country. Hon. Supreme Court has taken notice of it and given its opinion in this regard. So far the unauthorised felling of trees in terai region of Nepal is concerned I would like to state that a meeting was held in Kathmandu on this subject and this point, was discussed with the Nepal Government. Since the very beginning I am taking the issue of environment seriously. It has come to my notice that forest has been removed and some persons have set up there who are doing harm to these forests. This matter will be taken sympathetically because it relates to our neighbouring and friendly country. Appropriate measures will be taken to check the loss mentioned by you and the House will be informed about it.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I have seen all the hands, including fingers.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI JANG BAHADUR SINGH PATEL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what action has been taken on the proposal submitted by the Uttar Pradesh Government worth Rs. 12.17 crore.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : At present, I do not know anything about U.P. Government's proposal. This matter relates to security of forests and damage is being caused to them. We have sufficient legal points and legislation in the case of wood seized in U.P. It is case of violation of Law. Out of the total 16 cases, two have been compounded and all these cases have been taken up for hearing in the court. We will pay due attention towards the proposal submitted by the U.P. Government. We have written a letter to the Governor regarding the action taken on it and instructions have been issued to stop damage being caused to forests. ...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Yesterday he got all the chances. I must see that those who did not get a chance yesterday should get it today.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI JAGDAMBI PRASAD YADAV : I would like to say that whether the attention of the Government have been drawn towards unauthorised felling of trees in forest of Sibhu district of Bihar which was spread over miles. The Khair wood is being cut at every place. Whether the Government propose to take some measures to check it ?

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : Sir, it is a general question and not about any particular area. I will reply your question if it is for a specific area.

SHRI JAGDAMBI PRASAD YADAV : This unauthorised felling of trees have destroyed the miles of forest cover in Chhota Nagpur and Sibhu districts which are considered very precious. Khair wood is being cut at every place in the country but the Government has not taken any measures for providing protection to them. It is a serious matter and being raised here every year, some measures should be taken for protection of forest cover if the Government intends to protect the environment.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : The hon. Member has raised the issue regarding forest cover of Sibhu district ... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Please wait. He is asking the question.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I do not admit simple questions. I admit only complicated ones.

[Translation]

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : As the reference has been made of a particular district, I will focus my attention on Siba district only. The hon. Member would be apprised of the action taken in this regard.

[English]

I will take note of it.

[Translation]

SHRI LALMUNI CHAUBEY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is in the notice of the Bihar Government that six thousand acre of land has been denuded of its forest cover and the land so reclaimed distributed among the feudalists by people of another district. I am talking of Kaimur district. I will mention the areas which may please be noted and an enquiry be conducted in this matter as it pertains to environment. Batas gaon, Kuwakhoh, Galiari ... in Chainpur block of Bhaduha sub-division in Kaimur district ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You give this information in writing. There is no need of questioning.

SHRI LALMUNI CHAUBEY : Whatever is going on in Bihar with regard to the environment is something

unprecedented. Saranda forest which falls in Chaibasa district, was set on fire and the forest is burning for the last three years but so far no fire control measures have been taken there. Sakhua forest provides very costly timber and it is very dense at Saranda. The smugglers set it on fire because they want that Department of Environment should either auction it or lease it out. They wanted so because copper depositories are there and gold is extracted from copper. So for gold the smugglers burnt down this forest. An enquiry should be conducted in this matter as the environmental matters have acquired international dimensions.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : This is only a suggestion.

[Translation]

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : The staff and officers of forest department including the rangers are ill-equipped. They do not have arms and jeeps. That is why they feel scared of goons and smugglers and have to run to save their lives. This condition prevails throughout the country. Therefore, what measures Government proposes to take to well equip them so as to enable them to counter smugglers. Because in Maharashtra ...

MR. SPEAKER : Now you have asked the question, so there is no need of this 'because'

[English]

You cannot give the reason also.

[Translation]

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : Cases of certain districts have been mentioned. Whatever cases have figured in records, I will look into them.

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : What you will look into ?

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : Please hear me with patience. If you do not get the reply, then again raise your question. So far as these districts are concerned, these are in different constituencies of different Members. I will look into the cases of those districts which have been mentioned in the records and the hon. Members will get the reply. As for the forest policy, Sir, through you I would like to submit that I am satisfied with the work being done in the Ministry to protect forests. Hon. Supreme Court had given a judgement in this regard on 12 December, 1996 which is very relevant in this matter. In that judgement right from North-East to J & K ... (Interruptions). Please first listen to me.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : No arguments please.

Mr. Minister please give a short answer.

[Translation]

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : The entire country is anxious to conserve forests. I am aware of this particular anxiety of the people. I shall again make myself available in your service. Lot of work is being done to implement the policies of the Ministry. On this issue the Supreme Court has ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Dr. Saheb it is not the practice.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : They will be provided arms, I will tell about that later. First of all I will reply to your various questions pertaining to forests. It is a genuine anxiety and we all feel concerned. My Ministry had cautioned all the Chief Ministers of States in this regard. The entire nation is concerned about conservation of forests. Any violation of rules in this regard will not be tolerated.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Minister please do not prolong your answer. You will attract more supplementaries.

[Translation]

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : I have told about the Supreme Court's order. A high power committee comprising some experts, have been constituted to go through all these issues. As for the staff of the forest department, I will see to it that all facilities are provided to the forest personnel who have to work in jungles. ... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I have given the floor to her.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI BHAGWATI DEVI : Large scale felling of Khair trees is going on in the forests of my area. The trucks belonging to rich people reach there, their men hack the trees and carry it to factories and big people trade in it. The Central Government may tell us as to what action it is taking against the owners of those factories which illegally purchase this Khair wood.

[English]

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : Sir, this is a general question. I will do everything possible to protect the forests.

Naga-Kuki Violence

*144. SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO :
SHRI CHITTA BASU :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the recent spurt in Naga-Kuki violence in Nagaland;