

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3745
ANSWERED ON:23.08.2004
SMUGGLING OF TREES
Rao Shri Kavuru Samba Siva

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

- (a) whether plots of forest land under commercial plantation are leased out after the forest department has felled the trees;
- (b) if so, whether lease holders are using the lease to gain legal entry into the forest and then cutting trees and smuggling them out under the guise of removing waste wood and roots from the leased lands as reported in the `Hindustan Times` dated August 08, 2004;
- (c) if so, the number of such cases which came to the notice of the Government during each of the last three years and persons arrested and value of trees thus seized, State-wise ; and
- (d) the corrective steps taken by the Government in this regard ?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

- (a) Yes, Sir. Certain plots of forest land under commercial plantations, such as Eucalyptus and Poplar plantations in Terai areas of Uttaranchal State, are leased out for a short period of two to three years, after the Forest Department has felled the trees. This is done to suppress the weeds before the forestry plants attain adequate height to compete against the weeds.
- (b) Facts have been ascertained from the State Government of Uttaranchal on news paper report of Hindustan Times dated August 8, 2004 and it was not found based on the reality. A rejoinder to this effect has been published in the newspaper on 13.8.2004. No other such cases have come to the notice of the Central Government.
- (c) Does not arise.
- (d) The State / UT Governments are responsible for the protection of forests and wildlife. Constant vigil is kept to prevent / control any damage by their staff for this purpose.