

would render themselves liable to exemplary punishment. It has also emphasised that senior officers should continuously guide investigating officers during inspections and meetings and impress upon them the need for adopting correct and prescribed methods of investigation. Apart from specific guidelines, State Governments have been advised that there is a necessity to bring about qualitative change in the approach and behaviour of the Police towards the general public. Human Rights as a subject has been introduced in the curricula of several Police Training Institutes, including the premier training Institute for IPS Officers viz., the National Police Academy, Hyderabad.

Protecting Indian Fishermen

278. SHRI R. MARGABANDU: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India will take steps to retrieve Katchatheevu Island from Sri Lanka;

(b) whether India is aware of the attack on Indian fishermen in the Bay of Bengal;

(c) what steps the Central Government has taken to save the above said fishermen; and

(d) whether Government are aware of the repeated requests made by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister to protect Indian fishermen from the onslaught of Sri Lanka?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) Government regard the delimitation of Indo-Sri Lanka Maritime Boundary through the Agreement of 1974 and 1976 as a settled matter. In terms of the Agreements, the Katchatheevu lies on the Sri Lankan side of the International Boundary Line.

(b) to (d) Government have received reports of attacks on Indian fishermen in the Palk Straits. The Government of India has taken up strongly with the Government of Sri Lanka the incidents where involvement of Sri Lankan forces is reported by the fishermen, expressing its concern, calling for expeditious release and/or compensating for injury/damage as appropriate. The Government of Sri

Lanka has denied involvement in these incidents. Attacks by LTTE on Indian fishermen have also come to Government's notice.

Bilateral discussions were held in October, 1993 and in March 1994 to discuss measures for preventing such incidents of attacks on Indian fishermen in future. Both sides agreed that there is need to implement effective measure devised to prevent recurrence of such incidents. The issue was taken up during the visit of the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka in December, 1994 and with the President of Sri Lanka during her visit in March, 1995. The two sides have agreed on the need to continue the process of bilateral discussions to resolve this issue. Reports of attacks on Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan navy have become less frequent since August, 1995. Meanwhile, Government agencies and Coast Guards caution Indian fishermen against transgressing the International Border Line. This advice has been reiterated in view of the disturbed conditions in the north of Sri Lanka.

Government are aware of requests made by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister to prevent harassment to Indian fishermen.

Extinction of Medicinal Plants

279. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of medicinal plants in the country are on the verge of extinction;

(b) whether Government have identified these plants; if so, their names and uses;

(c) whether it is also a fact that some pharmaceutical companies are exploiting these scarce plants in a big way; and

(d) if so, whether Government have chalked out any plan to grow these plants and also to save them from exploitation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) and (b) The Botanical Survey of India conducts surveys of flora including the medicinal plants in the country and identifies rare and endangered species.