

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI TH. CHAOBA SINGH): (a) and (b) No, Sir, Government has, so far, no proposal to develop a Science City in Guwahati during the Ninth Five Year Plan. However, a Regional Science Centre is operating in Guwahati since 1994.

Calendar of important events in 2000

1704. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of CULTURE, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have prepared any calendar of important events to be celebrated in the Year 2000.

(b) if so, what are the criteria for inclusion of items in the calendar; and

(c) if not, whether Government would consider preparation of such a calendar?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI TH. CHAOBA SINGH): (a) to (c) In the year 2000, events are planned to commemorate historical events like the 50th Anniversary of the Republic of India, 125th Birth Anniversary of Sardar Patel, 100th Birth Anniversary of Kazi Nazrul Islam, 600th Anniversary of Sant Kabir and 300th Anniversary of the Birth of Panth Khalsa.

Further, as is customary, Museums attached to the Department of Culture organise Exhibitions on themes of public interest. The exact timing of these Exhibitions depends on the availability of objects & gallery space.

Laws dealing with ancient artefacts

1705. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of CULTURE, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that existing laws dealing with the theft/smuggling of ancient artefacts are found inadequate and ineffective; and

(b) if so, whether Government propose to amend the existing laws as to protect valuable articles from being stolen/smuggled from precious monuments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI TH. CHAOBA SINGH): (a) and (b) The Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 is under review to identify provisions which need to be revised or strengthened. However, it will not be possible to indicate a time-frame for the completion of this exercise.

Quality of sports equipments

1706. SHRI SATISHCHANDRA SITARAM PRADHAN: Will the Minister of CULTURE, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that sports equipments available to our sportmen are either inferior in quality or are outdated; and

(b) if so, what are Government's plans in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI TH. CHAOBA SINGH): (a) No, Sir. The Government of India has been providing adequate assistance to the Sports Authority of India (SAI) for making quality sports equipments available to sports persons included in the National Teams.

(b) Does not arise.

Change in venue of National Youth Festival

1707. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of CULTURE, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision to change the venue of the National Youth Festival from Kerala;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) what are the steps taken by Government for organising the National Youth Festival?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI TH. CHAOBA SINGH): (a) to (c) In pursuance of a request received from the Government of Gujarat, the VI National Youth Festival is being organised in that State during January, 2000.