

Statue vandalized in London

2456. DR. ABHISHEK MANU SINGHVI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether statue of Thiruvalluvar, the Tamil Saint, philosopher and poet installed at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London, has been vandalized; and

(b) if so, the steps that have been taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) No. But the statue shows signs of wear and tear from exposure for over 10 years. Two scratches and small hole have also been observed.

Indo-Nepal treaty to curb crime

2457. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Nepal have signed an agreement to ensure that law-breakers in one country do not find easy refuge across the border;

(b) whether the two Governments have also agreed to update the vintage 1953 extradition treaty to enable extradition of third-country citizens,

(c) whether under this agreement legal assistance would be provided to facilitate cooperation in investigation and prosecution of crimes; and

(d) if so, by what time final decision of implementation of the agreement is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) According to the 1953 Extradition Treaty between India and Nepal, there is an agreement on the basis of reciprocity between the two Governments to deliver to each other those persons being accused or convicted of a crime committed in the territory of the other Government under specific circumstances and conditions enumerated in the Treaty. Subsequently, the two Governments initialled a new Extradition Treaty and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Treaty (MLAT) during the Home Secretary level talks held in India in January 2005.