

Chambers of Taj Mahal

2138. SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that certain chambers of the world famous Taj Mahal at Agra are kept closed by construction of brick walls as the chambers contain irrefutable evidence of the pre-Shahjahan construction of the monument;

(b) whether Government proposes to open these chambers at the time for the Commonwealth Games as a part of the campaign to make tourist sites more attractive; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The underground chambers of Taj Mahal, containing the mortal remains of Emperor Shahjahan and Begum Mumtaj Mahal, are closed since their burial for safety and security reasons. There is no plan to open these chambers.

Power generation from ocean thermal energy

2139. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any progress has been made in the research for generation of electrical energy by conversion of ocean thermal energy;

(b) if so, the stage up to which the research has reached; and

(c) by when such mode of power generation is likely to be put into practice?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) to (b) The Ministry of Earth Sciences through its technical arm, National Institute of Ocean Technology has been experimenting an generation of electrical energy by ocean thermal energy conversion (OTEC), utilising difference in temperature in ocean surface and ocean bottom. The generation of electricity using OTEC is not yet successful on commercial scale so far due to high capital cost, low level of power generation and other technical reasons.

(c) Does not arise.

Long crack in the earth

2140. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a 1 metre wide and 1 kilometre long crack in the earth took place in July, 2008 in Balasore district;

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

(c) does it indicate a possible earthquake in the near future in the local area; and