

Restoration of Thirumalai Naicker Palace in Srivilliputhur

776. SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) whether work has commenced on the restoration of the Thirumalai Naicker Palace in Srivilliputhur by the Archaeological Survey of India and details thereof;
- (b) if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Thirumalai Naicker Palace has been recommended to UNESCO to be put on the world heritage list and details thereof; and
- (d) if not, reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The essential conservation work to the Palace like water tightening of the terrace, strengthening of stucco mouldings on the western side etc. has been taken up and is in progress.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. The parameters prescribed by UNESCO for inclusion of any site/monument in the tentative list and subsequently in world heritage list, needs to be evaluated in respect of the Thirumalai Naicker Palace.

Financial support to NGO

777. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) whether his Ministry is financing certain Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the cultural field;
- (b) if so, the organization-wise details and scheme details since 2004-05 financial year;
- (c) whether it is a fact that number of NGOs failed to submit utilization certificates; and
- (d) if so, the measures initiated by Government in such cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) to (d) the information is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the House.

MoU between Sahitya Akademy and Samsung Corporation

778. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Sahitya Akademy, the National Akademy of Letters, an autonomous body functioning under and funded by his Ministry has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the multinational Samsung Corporation of South Korea, under which the said Samsung Corporation shall sponsor 24 new National literacy awards called "Samsung Rabindranath Tagore Awards";

(b) if so, whether his Ministry has approved this MoU;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether a policy decision has been taken that all National Awards and Honours conferred by the Government and the autonomous bodies under it can henceforth be sponsored by foreign and Indian multinationals and individuals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) An MoU has been signed by the Sahitya Akademi with M/s Samsung India Electronics Pvt. Ltd., a company registered under the Companies Act, 1956 and having its registered office at New Delhi. Under this MoU, Sahitya Akademi has agreed to undertake the selection of awardees for the "Tagore Literature Award", promulgated by the said company to promote Indian literary works and writers. The MoU has been signed for a period of six years, within which period eight Tagore Literature Awards will be given every year so as to cover, twice over, all the 24 languages recognized by the Sahitya Akademi. These awards are different from the Sahitya Akademi Awards in vogue.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. The MoU was initiated by the Korean Embassy in New Delhi to further Indo-Korea cultural relations and was forwarded by the Ministry of Culture to the Sahitya Akademi, which is empowered, under its Constitution, to promote cultural exchanges with other countries.

Before signing the MoU, the proposal was considered by the Executive Board of Sahitya Akademi and modalities of the Award were worked out by a Committee specially constituted by the Akademi for this purpose. The MoU has since been discussed and approved by the Executive Board and the General Council of Sahitya Akademi.

(d) No, Sir.

Pilgrims visiting Katas Raj

†779. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:

SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian pilgrims could not visit Pakistan based 'Katas Raj' shrine on the eve of Shivratri;

(b) whether affidavits were demanded from them at the last moment; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): (a) to (c) In view of the prevailing security situation in Pakistan and the existing travel advisory issued by Government in the context of travel to that country, organisations arranging pilgrimages to Pakistan in the recent past

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.