

Autonomy to PSUs

*277. SHRI KRIPAL
PARMAR: SHRI B.J.
PANDA:

Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to grant complete autonomy to PSUs to run their business;

(b) if so, the type of freedom that is proposed to be granted to help the PSUs compete with the private sector;

(c) whether any instructions in the matter have been issued by Government; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV) (a) to (d) The Government have pledged to devolve full managerial and commercial autonomy to successful profit making companies operating in a competitive environment. Government has set up a Group of Experts to make recommendations in this regard.

Report on ICHR

*278. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received an interim report of the one-man Review Committee of the Indian Council for Historical Research (ICHR);

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH) (a) to (c) The one-man Review Committee enquiring into the affairs of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) has so far submitted two interim reports. These relate to the "non-publication/stoppage of volumes of 'Towards Freedom' Project by ICHR"; and, on the "non-submission of research work by scholars, who were given Fellowships by the ICHR during the period between 1995-96 and 2000-01, as highlighted in the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for 2002-03".

[21 March, 2005]

RAJYA SABHA

In its interim report on the 'Towards Freedom' Project, the Committee has observed that attempts were made to scuttle the project through stoppage of funds and interruption in the publication of the volumes. The Committee has recommended the completion of the project within 24 months and the constitution of an Editorial Board with an eminent historian as the General Editor. The Committee has also recommended the streamlining of the procedures of publication and has suggested that the Government take a view regarding the present Council, including its Chairman.

On the issue of the 'non-submission of research work by scholars', the Committee has observed irregularities in the award of the Senior Research Fellowships and the National Fellowships, such as no proper representation to the different regions of the country, SCs/STs, women and the minorities. The Committee has recommended a Standing Search Committee to award National Fellowships, and the institution of a system of nominations to the Senior Search Fellowships as well as the computerisation of the fellowships programme and, the travel grant programme. The Committee has also recommended the recovery of fellowship grants from the defaulters.

The Government has accepted the recommendations of the Committee in the interim report on the "non-publication/stoppage of volumes of Towards Freedom Project", and the ICHR has been directed to take action on the same. The interim report of the Committee on "non-submission of research work by scholars" is under examination.

Upkeep of Taj Mahal

*279. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether UNESCO has made concrete suggestions for upkeep of Taj Mahal at Agra and maintenance of its surroundings and environment;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken to implement the same?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY) (a) Yes Sir. Based on the UNESCO-ICOMOS Joint Monitoring Mission, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in its meeting held in June-July 2004 has made the following recommendations concerning the World Heritage properties Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri.