

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYARANJAN DASMUNSI): (a) Yes, Sir. The recommendations of the Group of Ministers (GoM) were considered and approved by the Cabinet in its meeting on 20.10.2005.

(b) to (e) Based on the Cabinet decision of 20.10.2005, the Government has issued policy guidelines for downlinking of television channels on 11.11.2005 and the consolidated uplinking guidelines have been notified on 2.12.2005. These guidelines are available on the Ministry's website (<http://www.mib.nic.in>).

Saraswati Heritage Project

†*180. SHRI DEVDASAPTE: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Archaeological Survey of India has cancelled its Saraswati Heritage Project;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government are aware that some voluntary organizations have discovered several geographical and archaeological facts;

(d) the mode of verifying the information gathered through these means as Saraswati Heritage Project has since been discontinued; and

(e) the details of Government's scheme in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (e) No Sanction order in regard to Saraswati Heritage Project was issued. Several studies including explorations and excavations have been carried out both by the governmental and non-governmental organizations along the palaeochannel, represented today by the Ghaggar river in Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat. Some researchers have ascribed this palaeochannel to the Saraswati river mentioned in ancient Indian literature, but no scientific evidence to establish this correlation exists. Archaeological excavations continued independent of any such project during the field season 2004-05 at Bhirrana and Hansi (both in Haryana), Baror (in Rajasthan), Dholavira and Juni Kuran (both in Gujarat). The excavation at Bhirrana is continuing in 2005-06.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.