

**Remnants of Indian culture in SAARC Nations**

1107. SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps taken by Government for improvement and development of remnants of Indian culture in South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) nations;
- (b) the country-wise list of remnants of Indian culture in SAARC nations; and
- (c) whether Archaeological Survey of India supports in executing conservation and restoration works at such places falling in SAARC countries and if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) to (c) The mandate of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is conservation and maintenance of protected monuments of national importance in the country alongwith other activities. Therefore, there is no list with the ASI about the remnants of Indian culture in South Asian Association Regional Cooperation (SAARC) nations. However, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has requested ASI to take up the conservation work of Pashupati Nath Temple in Nepal about which ASI has submitted Preliminary Conservation Proposal to the MEA. In another case of restoration of Thiruketheeswaram Temple in Sri Lanka, MEA has fixed ASI as Supervising Agency. All conservation activities outside the country are supported by MEA.

**Pension to persons contributing on cultural front**

1108. SHRI P. RAJEEVE: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has given pension to the persons who are giving contributions to cultural fronts such as drama;
- (b) if so, the details of the scheme; and
- (c) the State-wise details of persons getting benefit from this ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government is implementing “Artistes Pension Scheme and Welfare Fund” to give pension to Persons Distinguished in Letters, Arts and such other walks of Life who may be in indigent Circumstances and their Dependents. Under the Scheme, artists whose personal income (including income of the spouse) does not exceed ₹4,000/- per month and who are not less than 58 years of age are considered for financial assistance