

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) Scheme has been launched by Ministry of Tourism to identify and develop pilgrimage tourist destinations of all faiths. Under this Scheme, 12 cities have been identified from all over India including the NE Region, during the Current Financial Year.

(b) PRASAD Scheme is being implemented by Ministry of Tourism.

(c) PRASAD Scheme covers Puri in Odisha State as one of the cities among 12 Cities.

Neglect of Lothal remains

1786. SHRI T. RATHINAVEL: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the vestiges of Lothal, a city dating back to the 4,400 year old Harappan civilization are being obliterated;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the city has no guards to protect it and that the site is overrun with weeds, in addition to the picture of neglect and chaos;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Lothal's cemetery is no longer accessible due to wild growth on the approach; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government to preserve this 4,400 year old historically important city?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. Requisite staff has been deployed at the site for security and routine maintenance and the monument is maintained in a good state of preservation.

(c) No, Sir. Vegetation growth from main areas is removed regularly. After conducting excavations the cemetery area was filled up by the excavators for safety and security of the remains and at present there are no exposed remains of cemetery for public view.

(d) The essential conservation/maintenance work of the monument is attended regularly depending upon the availability of resources and need of repairs at the site and it is in a good State of preservation.