

Reopening of Mazars of Shahjahan and Mumtaz Mahal

352. DR. KANWAR DEEP SINGH: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether those reasons are still valid, based on which Mazars of Shahjahan and Mumtaz Mahal situated inside the Taj Mahal had been closed for tourist;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether the Ministry would consider a proposal to reopen these for regular visitors?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Due to limited space and narrow access for the entry/exist of visitors, the Mazars of Shahjahan and Mumtaz Mahal in the Taj Mahal are not opened to the public.

(c) At present there is no such proposal for reopening.

Classical status for Odia language

353. SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to grant classical status to Odia language on account of its in-built heritage features;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action plan of Government to render help both financially and physically to achieve the desired objective by the State Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) and (b) Classical Status has already been granted to Odia language *vide* Ministry of Culture's Notification No. 8-85/2012-Akademies dated 11/03/2014. This Notification is subject to the outcome of Writ Petition No. 18810 of 2008 (R. Gandhi Vs UOI and Ors) in High Court of Judicature at Madras.

(c) The University Grants Commission has agreed for setting up of chairs in the Indian Classical Languages including Odia in Central Universities in its meeting held on 04.02.2016. The Ministry of Human Resource Development has initiated the proposal for Presidential Awards for various Classical Languages including Odia language. Funds are not directly released to State Governments for promotion of Classical Languages.