

talent in the field of drama for organizing various programmes, festivals, seminars, trainings and schemes has been implemented; and

(b) whether any specific date for commencement of classes in these centres has been finalized and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) and (b) The Broad-Based Committee (Vision Committee) set up by the National School of Drama (NSD) Society in February 2005, *inter alia*, had recommended opening of five regional centres of the NSD across the country. On the basis of these recommendations, the decision to establish five regional centres during the Eleventh Five Year Plan period (2007-2012), one each at Kolkata, Mumbai/Goa, J&K, and North-East, besides upgrading the existing Regional Resource cum Research Centre, Bengaluru to a full-fledged regional centre, was taken by the Government. These regional centres were to be established in consultation with concerned State Governments, who were required to provide land/accommodation for the purpose. So far, only Government of Karnataka has provided land/accommodation in 2013 at Bengaluru for the purpose. Till date, no other concerned State Government has provided land to the NSD for opening of its regional branches.

Under NSD's Out-reach/Extension Programme, two Centres, one at Gangtok (Sikkim) and another at Agartala (Tripura), are functioning and are also conducting one year theatre training course in addition to the one being conducted at Bengaluru (Karnataka).

A proposal to declare NSD as an Institution of National Importance is under consideration of the Government. Till such time a final decision is taken in the matter, the NSD has decided to defer the opening of regional centres.

Bronze cancer jeopardising ancient idols

2894. SHRI N. GOKULAKRISHNAN: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ASI team found that a significant percentage of 1,100 idols screened so far in the Tiruvarur icon centre in Tamil Nadu, which house at least 4,380 antiques, suffer from bronze cancer, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the chloride corrosion of idols is incurable and sometimes contagious; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) to (c) As per the directions of the Hon'ble High Court of Madras in Cr.L.O.P.No.8690, to 12060 and 24150 of 2017, Archaeological Survey of India is responsible to examine the objects kept at Icon Centre, Thiyagaraja Swami Temple at Thiruvavur, only to ascertain whether they are Antiquities or not under Section 24 of Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972. Till date ASI has examined 735 objects. However to study the idols suffered from bronze cancer is not assigned to the Archaeological Survey of India.

Aims and objectives of NCF

2895. SHRI K.C. RAMAMURTHY: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the aims and objectives of National Culture Fund (NCF);
- (b) the amount accrued in the NCF so far since its inception; and
- (c) in what manner NCF helped in protecting, promoting and preserving India's culture and cultural heritage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) The aim of National Culture Fund (NCF) is to establish and nurture partnerships in the field of Culture and Heritage between private and public sectors, Government, non-Government agencies, private institutions and foundations and mobilize resources for the restoration, conservation, protection and development of India's rich, natural, tangible and intangible heritage.

The following are some of the major objectives of NCF:

- (i) to administer and apply the Fund for conservation, maintenance, promotion, protection, preservation and up gradation of monuments protected or otherwise;
- (ii) for the training and development of a cadre of specialists and cultural administrators;
- (iii) for innovations and experiments in arts;
- (iv) for documentation of cultural expressions and forms that have lost their relevance in contemporary scenario and are either fading out or facing extinction.