

(c) whether Government is taking action to forthwith stop such undesirable smuggling; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) The available data is not indicative of any such regular smuggling activity; and

(b) The number of instances of theft reported in the past three years are as follows:-

Year No. of cases

2005 2

2006 4

2007 3 (till date)

(c) and (d) The Archaeological Survey of India is fully committed towards the preservation and safety of the antiquities at the protected monuments as well as the site museums.

To ensure their safety, the Archaeological Survey of India engages security guards whose strength has been augmented by deploying private security guards, state police and home guard personnel and also the CISF at selected monuments.

Provisions exist under Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 for regulation of trade and export in antiquities and art treasures and for prevention of their illicit trafficking. Some of these provisions pertain to registration of dealers, registration of specified categories of antiquities, prosecution of offenders etc. The Government has launched a National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities for documentation of the monuments and antiquities. The provisions of the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act is also being amended to provide additional safe guards against illegal trafficking in antiquities.

Heritage status to Majuli Island in Assam

*273. KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Archaeological Survey of India and the State Government of Assam have fulfilled all requirements including submission of additional information towards fulfilling the conditions of UNESCO concerning the World Heritage Status of Majuli Island;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, whether these are likely to be submitted;

(d) the reason for inordinate delay to compile this information;

(e) whether Government would renominate to put Majuli in the world Heritage Map in 2008; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (f) The Archaeological Survey of India has engaged the services of consultants to collect and compile the additional information as sought by the World Heritage Committee. Discussions have been held with the State Government and action is being taken for timely submission of the required information to UNESCO by 31st January, 2008.

The State Government of Assam has passed "The Majuli cultural Landscape Region Act, 2006" which provides for legal protection of Majuli Island.

The World Heritage Committee is expected to consider the proposal of inscription of Majuli Island on the World Heritage List at its next meeting in June/July 2008.