

21-50/2010-CDN
Government of India
Ministry of Culture

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Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi
June 4, 2010

Sub : One Year's Achievements of the Ministry of Culture – 2009-2010.

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The undersigned is directed to forward a copy of "Achievements of the Ministry of Culture from the period May, 2009-May 2010" for your information. Soft copy thereof is being separately sent to you, too.

2. Please note that the material has also been uploaded on the website of the Ministry of Culture (www.indiaculture.nic.in) today.

(L.K. Chawla)
Deputy Secretary to the Govt. of India
Tel/Fax : 23383185

DG (ASI)
AS & FA
JS(M)/JS(G)/JS(T)
All Divisional Heads
Sr. PPS to Secretary

Copy forwarded for information to :-

1. Shri Sanjay Mitra, Joint Secretary, PMO.
2. Shri Jaideep Sarkar, PS to PM, Prime Minister's Office
3. Shri L.K. Atheeq, Director, PMO with reference to I.D.No. 190/31/C/11/2010-ES.2 dated 20th May, 2010.

One Year's Achievements
of the Ministry of Culture
May, 2010

From May 2009, the Prime Minister of India has assumed charge of the Ministry of Culture and several initiatives have been taken and new interventions and schemes introduced. Listed below are some of the important achievements:

1. MONUMENTS' LAW :

In a major intervention to further safeguard India's priceless monuments and archaeological sites, the Central government has recently amended the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, which clearly declares that no construction, whatsoever, including public projects, would be allowed within the 100 metre 'prohibited area' which begins from the end of the protected area of monuments of national importance. It has also been stipulated that Heritage Bye-laws shall be prepared for each of these protected monuments so as to regulate building activities in the next 200 metre 'regulated area' that lies beyond the 100 metre 'prohibited area'.

A National Monuments Authority is being set up as the apex body to over-see the implementation of the Act. At the regional and state level, Competent Authorities would be empowered to draft monument-specific Heritage Bye-laws and to enforce the amended Act. Penalties for violations have been increased to 2 years imprisonment and/or a fine of Rs. one lakh and even officials of the Central Government who are found guilty of not preventing violations are now punishable with imprisonment up to 3 years and/or fine. These strict provisions have been introduced to ensure that the ever-increasing threats to our monuments of national importance are arrested and its proper enforcement would ensure that India's valuable cultural heritage is better preserved and protected.

2. MUSEUM REFORMS:

Reforming and modernizing the major government museums of India have been taken up, on a high priority basis. These interventions cover, among others, the improvement of lighting and display of objects; increasing their appeal through digital and other attractive modes; computerizing the inventory of resources; imparting professional training to museum officials; involving interested citizens and making available to visitors, books and souvenirs of international standard. We intend to ramp up these functions in the museum sector progressively, as capacities are built up, in stages.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL MUSEUMS :

In a major boost to the 'museums movement', financial assistance for the establishment and/or modernization of Regional and Local Museums has been increased to record levels in the last year, covering over a score of museums, many of which are of the State governments. This has given a new spurt of energy in the promotion of the 'museum movement' in the country. Apart from languishing local museums and heritage centres that look forward to rejuvenation with our Central assistance, those covered represent a large variety and range, i.e., a museum of dance, a museum of Naga art and crafts, a museum of endangered trees, a museum of transport heritage, some palace museums, a rail museum and a Gandhi museum, and, of course, a number of conventional museums. Alongside the assistance, necessary emphasis is put on the needs for capacity building; conservation and documentation; and sustainability. Another Plan scheme of the Ministry of Culture provides financial assistance up to Rs.25 crores to museums in metro cities, under which the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (formerly known as the Prince of Wales Museum) of Mumbai and the Government Museum at Egmore, Chennai, have benefited.

4. PROFESSIONALIZATION OF CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS :

For years together, several institutions directly administered by the Ministry of Culture had no 'heads' and a conscious policy decision was

taken to take these posts outside the purview of the UPSC and embark upon a Search-cum-Selection Committee (SCSC) mode, as also to increase the age limits substantially. Under this programme of professionalism of cultural institutions, the SCSCs could locate qualified professionals to head 3 important cultural institutions, namely, the Archaeological Survey of India, the National Library and the National Archives of India. Professionals are also being inducted as heads of other cultural institutions and at other senior levels, below that of the head

5. SALARY AND PRODUCTION GRANTS SCHEME:

The Ministry's scheme of 'Salary and Production Grants' provides direct sustenance to hundreds and thousands of performing artistes and Directors/Gurus practicing traditional and contemporary forms of dance, music and theatre. In the last year, the financial assistance under the scheme of Salary Grant has been doubled from Rs. 3000 to Rs. 6000 per month for artistes and from Rs. 5000 to Rs. 10000 per month for the Gurus. After many years, a hundred new professional groups practicing performing arts were brought into the scheme and many more are open to consideration. In the year 2009-10, an overall financial assistance of Rs. 27 crores was provided under the scheme as compared to about Rs. 18 crores spent in the year 2008-09.

6. ARTISTES' PENSION SCHEME:

Under the 'artiste pension' scheme, the Ministry provides a monthly honorarium to those practitioners who have made significant contribution to the performing arts, letters, etc., in the prime of their life, are now living in indigent circumstances, in their old age. This monthly honorarium or pension has been doubled from Rs. 2000 to Rs. 4000 per month, thus assisting the 2000 odd existing beneficiaries of the Scheme. During the year 2009-10, about 670 more artistes were identified and declared eligible to draw the honorarium from 1st April, 2010. To mitigate the delays and the procedural hardships of the beneficiaries, the Life Insurance Corporation of India has been engaged to handle the disbursement of assistance under the scheme.

7. CULTURAL FUNCTIONS GRANTS SCHEME:

To encourage and to extend support directly to the cultural organizations in the non-government sector, that work tirelessly across the length and breadth of our country, a small, old scheme of support was revamped and reintroduced in October, 2009 as the 'Cultural Functions Grant Scheme'. Under this modified scheme, it became possible to give financial assistance to a large number and a large variety of cultural events, like festivals, exhibitions, seminars, conferences and small research projects, representing many different art forms and important cultural subjects. Before the end of the year 2009-10, over a hundred such events/projects had been sanctioned financial support, and this has blossomed into a very popular scheme.

8. VISITING FELLOWS SCHEME:

The cultural institutions with the Ministry can hardly display, utilize or make available more than a small portion of its treasures. The Indian Museum in Kolkata, for instance, can display less than ten percent of its holdings. To unravel these 'hidden' resources for the knowledge of scholars and for the benefit of the public, a new scheme of 'Visiting Fellows in Art, Culture & Heritage' was announced in November, 2009. It is expected that the scheme will provide an academic orientation to the activities of our national level cultural institutions and that researchers of the highest caliber will delve into the vast reservoir of cultural resources waiting to be explored and interpreted. The scheme seeks to generously compensate and facilitate those eminent scholars who are being attached to these institutions, for a period of about two years, to take up serious research projects that may add to the existing body of knowledge and the understanding of our rich cultural heritage.

9. ZONAL CULTURAL CENTRES:

In the mid-1980s, seven Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs), were set up with their headquarters at Patiala, Thanjavur, Nagpur, Dimapur, Udaipur, Allahabad and Kolkata, to focus on the and promotion of our traditional folk art forms. During the year 2009-10, we have substantially enhanced the rates of honorarium/remuneration for the folk artistes who participate

in the National Cultural Exchange Programme and other programmes of the ZCCs. Similarly, under the Guru Shishya Parampara Scheme that is operated by the ZCCs to sustain our rich cultural traditions, the monthly payments have been doubled from Rs. 2500 to Rs. 5000 for the Gurus, from Rs. 900 to Rs. 2500 for the accompanists and from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1000 for the pupils. These enhanced rates have become effective from 1st April, 2010.

10. INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL CENTRE FOR ARTS:

In the last year or so, the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) has organized eight major cultural events, namely, the Braj Bhumi festival, Nature Bazar, Surabhi Theatre festival, Inter-cultural Dialogue between North East India and South East Asia, International Federation of Library Association Conference, Vasant Bazar, Gharana festival and Women on Record: A Musical event. It is estimated that approximately seven to eight lakh people witnessed these events, which were extensively covered by the media as well. The more vibrant IGNCA has now emerged as a major cultural hub in the eyes of the public and the press.

11. BAL SAHITYA PURASKAR:

To encourage children's literature in the 24 Indian languages recognized by the Sahitya Akademi, this national body has instituted a new award to be known as Bal Sahitya Puraskar. The General Council of the Sahitya Akademi has approved the scheme in February, 2010 and the award amount will be Rs. 50,000/-. The first list of Award-winners will be declared during August 2010, and the first Bal Sahitya Puraskars will be presented around 14th November, 2010, the Children's Day.

12. NATIONAL AKADEMIES:

During the last one year, the cash component of Sahitya Akademi Awards (including Bhasha Sammans), the Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards

and the National Awards of Lalit Kala Akademi have all been enhanced from Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 1 lakh, so as to give better recognition to excellence in literary, visual and performing arts as well as to the writers, painters and the artistes. Similarly, the prize money of Sahitya Akademi's Translation Prizes and Sangeet Natak Akademi's Yuva Puraskars has been increased from Rs. 20,000 and Rs. 25,000 respectively to Rs. 50,000 each. The Sangeet Natak Akademi's Fellow (Akademi Ratna) is the highest honour in the field of performing arts, but the number of Akademi's Fellows had remained static since 1961. During the year 2009-10, it was decided to increase the number of Sangeet Natak Akademi's Fellows from 30 to 40 and to enhance the purse money for Akademi Ratnas from Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 3 lakhs.

13. CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF HIMALAYAN CULTURE STUDIES:

To preserve the unique cultural heritage of the North-East, the Central Institute of Himalayan Culture Studies has been approved to be set up in Dahung, in West Kameng District of Arunachal Pradesh with an initial outlay of Rs.9 crores. This is the first such Institute in the Region, patterned on the Central Institute of Buddhist Studies at Leh (Ladakh) and Central University of Tibetan Studies at Sarnath. The Report of the Mungekar Committee on review and improvement of standards of Buddhist Studies in Institutions under the Ministry of Culture is under consideration by Government.

14. COMMEMORATIONS AND MEMORIALS:

Rs.20 crores have been sanctioned for the upgradation of Sardar Patel's Memorials at Ahmedabad and Karamsad. A Web Portal on Gandhiji being hosted by Sabarmati Ashram, with the support of the Ministry and a 'master list' of the Gandhian Heritage Sites is also being published. Preparations have also started to commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversaries of Rabindranath Tagore and Swami Vivekananda, both nationally and internationally. Two high level National Committees under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Prime Minister have been constituted. The high level National Committees under the PM met on two separate

occasions on 20th May, 2010 to consider policies and frame guidelines for celebrations of commemoration in a befitting manner. The Celebrations of the 150th Anniversary of India's First War of Independence have been completed, according to the approved Plans. A Corpus Fund of Rs. 4 crores has been released to Delhi University for establishment of Chairs in memory of Aruna Asaf Ali and Tantia Tope and Rs. 2 crores to Jamia Milia Islamia University for a Chair in the name of M. A. Ansari. A National Register of Martyrs is being prepared by the ICHR. A Project to set up a Memorial for Shaheed Bhagat Singh, at his native place at Khatkar Kalan, has been sanctioned at a cost of Rs. 16.80 crores. Rs. 46.38 crores have been released to Government of Punjab for development of Talwandi Sabo and Anandpur Saheb as part of the concluding phase of the Ter-Centenary of Guru-ta-Gaddi of the Guru Granth Saheb.

15. DIGITISATION OF LIBRARY COLLECTIONS:

Keeping pace with technological developments, the Ministry has been actively pursuing the digitization of catalogues and other 'knowledge resources' in its cultural institutions.. This has progressed well in National Library where the catalogues of the books will be put on its refurbished, dynamic Website, in stages, from this year. Other major Libraries, like the Khuda Baksh Oriental Public Library Patna, Asiatic Society, Kolkata, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library and Delhi Public Library have also taken up important E-Projects.

16. MUNGEKAR COMMITTEE REPORT:

A Committee was set up earlier under Prof. BL Mungekar, to examine and recommend measures, inter-alia, for the improvement of Buddhist Studies in Institutions under the Ministry of Culture, has submitted its Report, for consideration by Government.

17. COMMONWEALTH GAMES, 2010:

The Commonwealth Games-2010 is being held in Delhi. During this period a large number of domestic as well as foreign visitors are expected

to visit Delhi. The Commonwealth Secretariat has adopted a slogan / key-word 'Welcome to Historical City of Delhi'. Keeping in view the historic importance of Delhi, all major monuments in Delhi are being spruced up specifically for the occasion to make them attractive from tourism point of view. 46 monuments in Delhi were exclusively identified which are either popular from tourism point of view or are located on main routes associated with the Commonwealth Games events. The work relating to structural conservation, environmental improvement and scientific preservation at these 46 monuments are going on in full swing. The visitors amenities like clean toilets, drinking water, car parking, publication sale counter, good approach road, signage, disabled friendly facilities, illumination during nights, brochures, etc. are also being upgraded.

18. COMPOSITE TICKETS FOR WORLD HERITAGE SITES & OTHER TICKETED MONUMENTS

There are 116 protected monuments, declared as of national importance in the country where entry for the visitors is through entrance tickets. While domestic, SAARC and BIMSTEC countries citizens are required to pay Rs.10/- per person the foreign visitors pay Rs.250/- at the World Heritage Sites. At other ticketed monuments the Indian, SAARC and BIMSTEC countries citizens are charged Rs.5/- per person and foreign visitors Rs.100/- per person. The ASI has introduced specially designed tickets at both the categories of monuments from 3rd December, 2009. These tickets may be purchased in advance from any of the ASI's outlets in the country and could be used by the visitors for entry into the monument of their choice.
