

Bill No. 275 of 2019

THE SPECIAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR ANCIENT MONUMENTS
AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND REMAINS IN THE STATE
OF WEST BENGAL BILL, 2019

By

DR. SUKANTA MAJUMDAR, M.P.

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BILL

to provide for special financial assistance to the State of West Bengal to meet the costs of repairs, renovations and preservation of ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains including excavation of new archaeological sites and remains situated in the State of West Bengal.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Seventieth Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

1. (1) This Act may be called the Special Financial Assistance for Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains in the State of West Bengal Act, 2019.

Short title
and
commencement.

5 (2) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

Definitions.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires "ancient monument" means any structure, erection or monument, or any tumulus or place of interment, or any cave, rock sculpture, inscription or monolith which is of historical, archaeological or artistic interest and which has been in existence for not less than one hundred years and includes—

(i) remains of an ancient monument;

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(ii) site of an ancient monument;

(iii) such portion of land adjoining the site of an ancient monument as may be required for fencing or covering in or otherwise preserving such monument; and

(iv) the means of access to, and convenient inspection of, an ancient monument.

Special financial
assistance to the
State of West
Bengal.

3. There shall be paid such sums of moneys out of the Consolidated Fund of India, every year, as Parliament may by due appropriation provide, as special financial assistance to the State of West Bengal to meet the costs of repairs, renovations and preservation of ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains, including excavation of new archaeological sites and remains, situated in the State of West Bengal, as may be undertaken by the State with the approval of the Central Government.

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Act not in
derogation of
any other law.

4. The provisions of this Act shall be in addition to and not in derogation of any other law for the time being in force.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

The West Bengal is one of the favourite destinations of tourists, both domestic and foreign. West Bengal located on eastern bottleneck of India stretching from the Himalayas in the north to the Bay of Bengal in the south, presents some of marvelous landscape features and natural scenic beauty. Some of India's most preferred travel destinations like; the Darjeeling Himalayan hill region in the northern extreme of the State and the Sundarbans mangrove forests in the extreme south.

During the British colonial era, Kolkata enjoyed the privilege of being the capital of British India and witnessed a spate of frenzied construction of buildings, largely influenced by the conscious intermingling of Neo-Gothic, Baroque, Neo-Classical, Oriental and Islamic schools of design. Unlike many north Indian cities, whose construction stresses minimalism, the layout of much of the architectural variety in Kolkata owes its origins to European styles and tastes imported by the British and, to a much lesser extent, by the Portuguese and French.

The different tourist destinations attract the tourists because of various reasons including its ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains.

At present, the Archaeological Survey of India is looking after the maintenance and conservation of 143 monuments/sites. These monuments belong to different periods, ranging from the pre-historic period to the colonial period and are located in different geographical settings. They include temples, mosques, tombs, churches, cemeteries, forts, places, step-wells, rock-cut caves, and secular architecture as well as ancient mounds and sites which represent the remains of ancient habitation.

Taking care of the monuments is an important duty that devolves on the respective State Government as well as the Central Government. It needs funds to engage people who can look after monuments, ensure that the miscreants do not harm them, as also to get the damaged portion repaired from expert designers and engineers. The Central Government must provide adequate funds for each monument.

The proper upkeep and maintenance of ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains in West Bengal shall boost heritage tourism which will in turn increase employment, revenue generation and local business in West Bengal.

It is, therefore, necessary that the Central Government should provide special financial assistance to the State of West Bengal to meet the costs of repairs, renovations and preservation of ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains including excavation of new archaeological sites and remains situated in the State of West Bengal.

Hence this Bill.

NEW DELHI;
November 5, 2019.

SUKANTA MAJUMDAR

FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM

Clause 2 of the Bill provides that there shall be paid such sums of money out of the Consolidated Fund of India, every year, as Parliament may, by due appropriation, provide, as special financial assistance to the State of West Bengal to meet the costs of repairs, renovations and preservation of ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains including excavation of new archaeological sites and remains situated in the State of West Bengal, as may be undertaken by the State with the approval of the Government of India.

The Bill, therefore, on enactment, will involve expenditure out of the Consolidated Fund of India. As the sums of moneys which will be given to the State of West Bengal as special financial assistance by appropriation by law made by Parliament will be known only after the plans to be implemented by the State Government with the approval of Government of India are identified, it is not possible at present to give the estimates of recurring expenditure, which would be involved out of the Consolidated Fund of India at this stage.

No non-recurring expenditure is likely to be incurred from the Consolidated Fund of India.

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(Dr. Sukanta Majumdar, M.P.)