

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
(DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE)

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 2454
ANSWERED ON 21/03/2025

PROMOTION OF EXPORT OF BRONZE AND PANCHALOHA IDOLS

2454. SHRI S. KALYANASUNDARAM:

Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps taken by Government to promote the export of Bronze and Panchaloha idols from Kumbakonam region, the details thereof;
- (b) whether Government is aware of the issues faced by the craftsmen such as export restrictions due to the possibility of idol smuggling by nefarious elements, the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken to address the same, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
(SHRI JITIN PRASADA)

(a) The Government, under the Districts as Export Hubs (DEH) initiative, has identified Thanjavur District, including the Kumbakonam region, for the promotion of brass products such as the renowned Swamimalai bronze icons. These idols have been granted Geographical Indication (GI) status, which enhances their branding and protects their authenticity in international markets. To boost exports, State Export Promotion Committees (SEPC) and District Export Promotion Committees (DEPC) have been established across states, including Tamil Nadu. District Export Action Plans (DEAPs) have been developed for 590 districts, including 20 in Tamil Nadu, to address supply chain gaps and implement targeted interventions. The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) is actively conducting outreach events in collaboration with e-commerce platforms, government bodies, and industry associations to train and support MSMEs and small-scale exporters. The Government also encourages artisans to

participate in international trade fairs and digital marketing campaigns to showcase and promote Swamimalai bronze icons globally, positioning Thanjavur as a center of excellence in traditional craftsmanship.

(b) & (c) The Government is aware of the challenges faced by craftsmen in exporting bronze and Panchaloha idols, primarily due to restrictions aimed at preventing idol smuggling. The Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972, regulates the export of antique idols to curb illicit trade. Each idol intended for export must obtain a Non-Antiquity Certificate (NAC) from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to verify that it is not an antique. This certification process helps in ensuring compliance with regulations while supporting legitimate artisans.
