

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 513
TO BE ANSWERED ON 24.7.2025

PUBLICATION OF KEEZHADI EXCAVATION REPORT BY ASI

513. SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) Reasons for halting further excavation and delays in publishing the report submitted on the first two phases of Keezhadi excavation carried out between 2013-16 in Sivaganga;
- (b) Whether the Ministry is aware that, as per order of the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court dated 27 February 2024, an assurance was given that the report would be published within nine months, a deadline that expired in November 2024; and
- (c) whether the ASI has recently requested the original author to resubmit the report, and if so, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF CULTURE AND TOURISM
(SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

(a) Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) had identified archaeological potential of Keezhadi after conducting survey in Vaigai river basin. The site was taken up for excavation for the seasons 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17. Excavations at important sites are done by various agencies including State Archaeology Departments and academic institutions. Currently, the Keezhadi excavation is being conducted by the State Archaeology Department of Tamil Nadu.

(b) No such order was issued on 27th February 2024. However, order dated 29th February 2024 by the Honorable Madurai Bench of Madras High Court had directed towards submission of the report. The report on the excavation conducted during 2014-15 and 2015-16 has already been submitted and vetted by eminent scholars as per set practice.

(c) The lead Archaeologist submits a report of the excavation, which is vetted by the experts. After duly verifying and incorporating the conclusions of experts in concurrence with the lead excavation Archaeologist, ASI releases an official report. Keezhadi excavation has been conducted under the aegis of ASI and a report of lead Archaeologist was reviewed. The comments of experts have also been shared with the lead Archaeologist.

ASI is fully committed to follow the law and duly worldwide accepted scientific process and practice for releasing the accurate finding based on the excavation at Keezhadi.
