

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 154
ANSWERED ON 29.11.2021**

UNLICENSED SALE OF FAKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARTEFACTS IN ERNAKULAM

154. SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH:

Will the **Minister of Culture**

संस्कृति मंत्री

be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware of illegal and unlicensed sale of fake archeological artifacts in Ernakulam, Kerala State, by an individual named Monson Mavunkal claiming to be in possession of rare archaeological artifacts?
- (b) if so, whether the Government has taken steps to enquire about the matter as claims of artifacts reportedly predating centuries were in the possession of Monson Mavunkal; and
- (c) whether the Government is aware of individuals trading and dealing with articles of archeological value without permission, registration or license from Archaeological Survey of India and indulging in transnational smuggling of such artifacts and if so, the steps taken to regulate, prevent and monitor such acts by individuals;
- (d) whether the Government is in possession of details pertaining to the total value of such articles that have been recovered; and
- (e) if so, the details of such cases and action taken thereupon?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION

(SHRI G. KISHAN REDDY)

- (a) to (c) Under Antiquities and Art Treasure Act, 1972, a licence is required for business of sale of antiquities and Shri Monson Mavunkal is not a registered licence holder. On the request of the Superintendent of Police, Crime Branch Central Unit- II, Ernakulam; a team from ASI, Thrissur Circle inspected the artifices/objects kept in the house of Shri Monson Mavunkal. As per provisions in the Act, registration of certain antiquities and transfer of their ownership are done. ASI also issues licences to antiquity dealers following the provision of AAT Act.
- (d) & (e) The objects seized by Kerala Police are in the custody of their Crime Branch.