

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-921
ANSWERED ON- 02/12/2024

CASES OF IDOLS SMUGGLING AND THEFT

921. DR. KALANIDHI VEERASWAMY

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:-

- (a) the details of total number of cases of idol smuggling or theft from temples in Tamil Nadu State that have been reported to law enforcement agencies during the last five years;
- (b) the details of the list of the temples affected by idol smuggling or theft in Tamil Nadu State, along with the estimated value of the stolen idols;
- (c) the details of the measures taken by the Government to prevent and combat idol smuggling and theft from temples in Tamil Nadu State;
- (d) the details of the total number of individuals that have been arrested/charged in connection with idol smuggling or theft from temples in Tamil Nadu State and current status of these cases in the legal system;
- (e) the details of individuals involved in politics or religious heads convicted in connection with idol smuggling or theft cases in Tamil Nadu State; and
- (f) the details of the cases and convictions?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF CULTURE AND TOURISM
(SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

- (a)& (b) During the last five years, one idol has been reported stolen from the Centrally Protected Monument. The metal idol of Panchaloga (standing Vishnu) was stolen from the Parthasarathi and Krishna Temple, at Vilavankode, Dist. Kanyakumari. FIR was lodged at the Pudhukadai Police Station and the idol was recovered.
- (c) Archaeological Survey of India is committed to protection of monuments, sites and antiquities under its jurisdiction. Besides regular watch and ward staff of Archaeological Survey of India, Private Security Guards and Central Industrial Security Force have been deployed as per requirement. Whenever any theft of antiquity is reported, FIR is lodged in concerned police station and 'Look Out Notice' is issued to law enforcement agencies including Custom Exit Channels to keep vigil to trace stolen antiquity and prevent its illegal export.
- (d) to (f) One arrest by the Tamil Nadu Police has been reported in the case of theft at Parthasarathi and Krishna Temple at Vilavankode, Dist. Kanyakumari.
