

Need to recognise Lanka Podi Mahotsav in Nayagarh, Odisha, a cultural heritage festival

SHRI SUKANTA KUMAR PANIGRAHI (KANDHAMAL): Hon. Chairperson, Madam, I rise to draw the attention of the House to the Lanka Podi Yatra celebrated annually in Daspalla of Nayagarh district of Odisha. This 16-day festival, commencing from Ram Navami, is a vibrant cultural event that enacts episodes from the epic Ramayana, culminating in the symbolic burning of a 35-feet effigy of Ravana, symbolizing the triumph of good over evil.

Initiated in 1802 by King Trilochan Bhanj and later enhanced in 1805 by King Krushna Chandra Bhanj, the festival has evolved into a significant cultural tradition attracting thousands of visitors annually.

In light of its historical significance and cultural richness, I would urge the Ministry of Culture to grant permanent recognition, that is to officially recognize the Lanka Podi Yatra, the Ram Leela Festival, as a cultural heritage festival ensuring its preservation and promotion.

I would also request you to provide financial assistance for organizing and promoting such a unique mega-festival and to improve local infrastructure including roads, sanitation, and accommodation facilities for the visitors and tourists, and support the local economy.

Last but not the least, I would request to feature this festival in national and international tourism circuits showcasing Odisha's rich cultural heritage. I would request the hon. Minister of Culture to consider these proposals to ensure the preservation and promotion of this unique cultural tradition. Thank you, Madam.