

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3470

ANSWERED ON:24.08.2006

SEEPAGE IN AJANTA CAVES .

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Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether the magnificent ancient rock caves at Ajanta are at danger due to seepage of rain water;
- (b) If so, whether the rock caves have not been protected from man-made or natural disaster;
- (c) If so, the details thereof; and
- (d) The action / steps taken by the Union Government in this direction?

Answer

MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND CULTURE (SMT. AMBIKA SONI)

(a) Ajanta caves are not at danger due to seepage of rain water.

(b) to (d) Ajanta caves are excavated in deccan trap which has several natural horizontal and vertical cooling cracks that allow seepage of rain water. The leakages persist for a few days even after stoppage of rain. Seepage occurs during monsoon in cave Nos. 1,2,12,16,17,19,21,22,24,25 & 26. Most of the leakage points are in the verandahs of the caves.

The problem of leakage and surface water management is already referred to Geological Survey of India (GSI), Central Water & Power Research Station, Pune

(CWPRS) and Structural Engineering Research Centre, Chennai (SERC) and studies are in progress. As per recommendations of GSI, the contour drains provided at three different levels have been repaired to control the surface water. Damaged & missing facades and pillars of several caves have been reconstructed which have effectively controlled the entry of rain water in the caves.

A panel of International and Indian experts has been constituted for monitoring the conservation works of Ajanta & Ellora caves under Japan Bank of International Cooperation (JBIC) Project and two meetings have taken place in November 2004 and November 2005 during which the problems of conservation of the caves were discussed in detail.