

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:556
ANSWERED ON:28.02.2008
MUDPACK TREATMENT OF TAJ MAHAL
Rao Shri Sambasiva Rayapati

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that the Taj Mahal has been yellowing due to the pollution;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government is considering Mudpack Treatment to restore Taj's glory;
- (d) if so, the details in this regard; and
- (e) the steps taken / being taken by the Government to restore the Taj's glory?

Answer

MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND CULTURE(SMT. AMBIKA SONI)

(a) & (b) Yes Sir, Archaeological Survey of India has set up an air pollution laboratory at Taj Mahal, Agra which regularly monitors the air quality in the ambience of Taj Mahal since 1982. The average level of suspended particulate matter (SPM) is five times higher than the permissible limit prescribed for monuments. This causes the yellowing of the marble surfaces, particularly in rain sheltered areas such as marble cladding in the arches/niches of main mausoleum, marble brackets etc.

(c) to (e) The clay pack method is used for the scientific cleaning of marble surfaces in order to safely and effectively remove superficial accretions. Fuller's Earth activated with certain suitable chemicals is used for this purpose. The marble surface to be cleaned is covered with a two millimeter thick layer of the paste of Fuller's Earth prepared in distilled water. The mud pack is covered with polythene sheets in order to allow sufficient time for action. When the paste dries naturally, it is removed from the surface with soft nylon brushes and the treated surface is washed with distilled water. The accretions are absorbed by the paste, leaving the stone surface clean. This method is non-abrasive, non-corrosive and quite effective in the removal of adherent accretionary deposits. Clay pack treatment is presently proposed to be taken up in two phases at the Taj Mahal. In the first phase, which started in January, 2008, the portion of the monument facing the Yamuna river has been taken up. Phase II will consist of cleaning of minarets.