

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3141
ANSWERED ON:09.12.2009
AUCTION OF MAHATMA GANDHI'S BELONGINGS
Vinay Kumar Alias Vinnu Shri

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

the steps taken by the Government to check the auction of the heritage items of the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi and the outcome thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS(SHRI S.M. KRISHNA)

A committee of eminent Gandhians and representatives of Gandhian institutions has been constituted in the Ministry of Culture to examine the contents of works/letters/manuscripts and other heritage items of Mahatma Gandhi, and to recommend, as and when the occasion arises, the course of action to be adopted by the Government when any of these, or an article associated with Gandhiji, comes up for auction in various parts of the world.

As a general policy, the Government refrains from entering into auctions of such items. However, on the basis of information received from Ministry of Culture, the Indian High Commission in London was authorized to obtain the manuscript of an article by Mahatma Gandhi, dated January 11, 1948, which was to be put up for auction in London in July 2007. Because of the intercession, the manuscript was withdrawn from the auction and acquired by the Indian High Commission after payment to the Auction House. Another recent incidence is the purchase, in a London auction, of a bunch of letters written by Mahatma Gandhi and a piece of Khadi cloth woven by him, by two Non Resident Indians, who subsequently presented the items to the Hon. Rashtrapatiiji during her visit to the UK in October 2009.