PRESS NOTE

Shri Satya Pal Malik, Hon'ble Governor of Goa has held telephonic conversation with Minister of Culture, GOI, Shri Prahlad Singh Patel and also written to him seeking his intervention in the matter of negligence of Archeological Survey of India (ASI) in the preservation, conservation and restoration of Basilica of Bom Jesus, Old Goa (copy enclosed). Hon'ble Governor, after receiving a copy of letter from Fr. Patricio Fernandes, Rector of Basilica of Bom Jesus, Old Goa, had called for a detailed report from ASI, Goa Circle. After going through the report, Hon'ble Governor is of the view that though ASI (Goa Circle) in its report has cited various constrains for the slow pace of work, the report reflects uncoordinated action and non-committal attitude of the different branches of ASI in dealing with preservation and restoration of the architectural marvel. As ASI functions under Ministry of Culture, Hon'ble Governor has sought the intervention of Minister of Culture, GOI, Shri Prahlad Singh Patel, and has requested him to direct the ASI authorities to pull up their socks to complete all the restoration works in a time bound manner and if possible, before the monsoon arrives in Goa. Hon'ble Governor has also invited Shri Prahlad Singh Patel, Minister Culture, GOI, to visit Basilica of Bom Jesus once the lockdown ends. The Minister of Culture has assured Hon'ble Governor that he would visit once the lockdown ends. Minister Culture further informed that he will send some Senior ASI Authorities to visit Basilica of Bom Jesus in the meantime.

Raj Bhavan, Goa
No.GS/05/2020/943
06th May, 2020

Forwarded alongwith photographs to the Director of Information & Publicity for release to the Press.

Encl: as above.

(Rupesh Kumar Thakur, IAS)
Secretary to Governor
Dear Sir Braj B. Patil,

Kindly recall our telephonic conversation of today, regarding the negligence of Archeological Survey of India (ASI), in the maintenance, preservation, conservation and restoration of Basilica of Bom Jesus.

You may be aware that Basilica of Bom Jesus, Old Goa is one of UNESCO’s world heritage sites and it is one of the most visited monuments in Goa. Basilica of Bom Jesus is one of the best examples of baroque architecture and holds special importance not only for Goans but also for entire catholic community of the world. It holds the mortal remains of St. Francis Xavier who is known as “Goencho Saheb” in Goa. The embalmed of St. Francis Xavier lies in an airtight coffin positioned in silver casket crafted by the 17th century Florentine sculptor Giovanni Battista Foggini. The saint is believed to have miraculous powers of healing and pilgrims come from all over the world to offer prayers. The silver casket is lowered for public viewing once in a decade during the public exposition.

This monument being UNESCO’s world heritage site, the task of preservation, conservation and restoration lies with the Archeological Survey of India (ASI). Recently, Fr. Patricio Fernandes, Rector of Basilica of Bom Jesus, Old Goa raised the issue of negligence and non committal behavior of the ASI in protection, preservation and conservation of this monument and expressed utter anguish on the colossal neglect of most frequented hallmark of Goa. He in his letter to ASI (Goa Circle) highlighted several instances of ASI’s negligence towards Basilica, such as neglect of repairs of side roof and false ceiling of Basilica, toilets not repaired for 3 years, no safety measures despite threat to security, no proper landscaping for pavement at the north gate, wooden alters in danger of crumbling due to termites, lack of restoration.
of paintings in Basilica, neglect of mausoleum and mastrillian casket, neglect of interior repair works etc.

My office on receiving the copy of the letter called for a detailed report from ASI, Goa Circle, which is also enclosed for your perusal. Though ASI has cited various constrains for the slow pace of work, such as non-availability of sand or disturbance during feast time or dillydallying and unresponsive behavior of the contractors, the entire attitude of the ASI in preserving, conserving and restoring the Basilica seems to be casual and lackadaisical. The report of the ASI reflects uncoordinated action and non-committal attitude of the different branches of ASI in dealing with preservation and restoration of the architectural marvel.

As ASI functions under the Ministry of Culture, I seek your kind intervention in the matter. I request you to direct the ASI authorities to pull up their socks to complete all the restoration works in a time bound manner and if possible, before the monsoon arrives in Goa. I am sure that your intervention in the matter will galvanize the ASI authorities and spur them to work in a professional and coordinated manner. I also take this opportunity to invite you to Goa for visiting the Basilica of Bom Jesus, one of the most sacred sites of Christianity in the world, once the lockdown ends.

With best wishes,

Yours faithfully,

(Satya Pal Malik)
Governor of Goa

Encl: as above.

Shri Prahlad Singh Patel,
Minister of Culture, GOI,
Room No. 501, ‘C’ Wing,
Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.