

Shame! 59 monuments encroached

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Karnataka, once respected for the legendary rulers of Nanda and Mauryan Empire, today neglects its own history and culture.

The state administration has done nothing to prevent encroachment and unauthorised construction on 59 of the centrally protected monuments, reveals the Union government.

This came to light in a questionnaire presented by Member of Parliament, Rajeev Chandrasekhar to the minister for culture.

Minister of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation and Minister for Culture Kumari Seljia in a letter replied to him: "There are 507 centrally protected



monuments/ sites in Karnataka. There are instances of encroachment and unauthorised construction on 59 of the centrally protected monuments".

In reply to the query on the action that the govern-

ment has taken to demolish the encroachments and illegal construction from these 59 sites, she said as and when an encroachment is noticed by the field office of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), an FIR is lodged with the local

police which is followed up with a show cause notice to the offender by the ASI. The Superintendent Archaeologist of the Circles is vested with the powers of the Estate officer and he/she can initiate action against the offend-

Some centrally protected monuments

- Old Dungeon Fort and Gates
- Tipu Sultan's Palace
- Pre-Historic Site (Chikajal)
- Tipu Sultan's birth place (Devanahalli)
- Pre- Historic Site (Hejjala)
- Pre- Historic Site (Managondanahalli)
- Pre- Historic Site (Savanadurga)

ers. "Action is also initiated under the Public Premises (Eviction of unauthorized occupants) Act, 1971 wherever applicable. Non compliance of the show cause notice is followed by demolition order issued to the offender as well as the district collector/magistrate to

remove any such encroachment within a specified period. In specific cases, the ASI has also filed a litigation against the encroachers before the court of law. Efforts have been made to remove the encroachments under the provision of the Ancient Monuments and

Archaeological sites and Remains Act. Further, the deputy commissioners of the respective districts have been requested to demolish the illegal encroachments," said Kumari Seljia. The action and the vigilance at the protected sites do not seem adequate despite the Union government assuring action against the offenders. In June 2011, a list was released that showed encroachment upon 53 monuments in Karnataka, and in less than a year, the number has gone up to 59.

Sources in the ministry of culture have also indicated that the number of monuments encroached upon could be many more than that stated in the letter.