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Women Engineers Year 2015

CEAI/ 109/2015



5th November 2015

Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman
Hon'ble Minister of State
Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Udyog Bhawan
New Delhi - 110011
Tel: 011 23061008

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Sub: Demolition of Hall of Nations & Industries and Nehru Pavilion at Pragati Maidan

Respected Madam,

Consulting Engineers Association of India (CEAI) is an apex body of Consulting Engineers having 500 members, comprising professional consulting engineering organisations and eminent engineering consultants. CEAI is the only Indian Member Association of FIDIC (Federation Internationale Des Ingenieurs - Conseils) i.e. International Federation of Consulting Engineers.

With deep anguish we write in relation to the proposed plan of restructuring the Pragati Maidan Complex, New Delhi. We have learnt that some of the iconic structures viz. Hall of Nations and the Nehru Pavilion, which stood testimony to the nation's prowess in structural engineering and architecture on its 25th year of independence, are being demolished to pave way for facilities such as basement parking and a driveway. CEAI, had earlier in January 2014 (letter enclosed) appealed to the Government to reject the proposal of demolition of these buildings.

The Hall of Nations constitutes the largest span concrete space frame structure in the world and was the first of its kind. The architecture ingenuity of this structure has been exhibited in several exhibitions including the Pompidou Museum, Paris and the National Gallery of Modern Art. The Hall of Nations was selected as one of the two structures from the country for an international exhibition of **World's Most Important Buildings of the 20th Century**. The structure was celebrated by a commemorative stamp issued in 1992 by the Government of India. These exhibition halls have not deteriorated structurally in any manner and are still being used to organise exhibitions of international standards. The Nehru Memorial is also an integral part of the complex.

These buildings form an integral part of the iconic contemporary architectural heritage of the nation and such structures must be preserved and conserved. They also symbolize the self-sufficiency of the country and provide immense inspiration to students and practitioners of the profession of architecture. It is suggested that the Government may organise competition to explore the possibilities of incorporating modern facilities in these exhibition halls and work towards its conservation as a Design Centre. The entire community of architects in the country is deeply concerned with the prospect of demolition of these unique and iconic structures and therefore pleads that the government may kindly reconsider this decision.

CEAI offers its unconditional involvement and support in any decision and action for conservation or modernization of these structures.

Thanking you,

Yours Sincerely,

Sudhir Dhawan

Sudhir Dhawan
President

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