



# Indian Association of Structural Engineers

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**By Email & Speed Post**

*Dated: 09/11/2015*

To,  
Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman  
Hon'ble Minister of State for Commerce and Industry  
(Independent Charge)  
Room No. 45, Udyog Bhawan, New Delhi  
Tel: 011 2306 1008, 2306 1492, Fax: 011.23062947  
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**Subject: Demolition of Iconic Structures: Hall of Nations; Nehru Pavilion**

Madam,

A lot of correspondence has been exchanged with reference to the preservation of the iconic structures viz Hall of Nations and Nehru Pavilion between the powers that be in the India Trade Promotion Organisation, Ministry of Commerce and the various concerned professional bodies like DUAC, INTACH, CEAL, IASE from 2011 onwards till date. Most recent is the article printed in the TOI dated November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 that re-iterates the importance of preserving the iconic structures that bear testimony to the emphatic expression of a country and its professionals emerging from the shadow of centuries of colonial Raj.

As President of the Indian Association of Structural Engineers (IASE) I am reiterating the sentiments expressed in the letter of my predecessor dated 21<sup>st</sup> January 2014:

- a. Largest-Span Concrete Space Frame Structure in the world.
- b. Heritage Structure in its own right blending seamlessly with its environs.
- c. Was conceptualised and executed to mark the Silver Jubilee celebrations of Independent India.
- d. Stands testimony to the India's achievements and excellence both in Architecture and Engineering.

While the Officer on Special Duty, Ms Meenakshi Singh in her reply to Mr Raj Rewal dated 20<sup>th</sup> August 2015, has no hesitation in accepting that the Crafts Museum and National Science Centre "have to be retained as such", we would be very grateful if a similar dispensation is accorded to the Hall of Nations and Nehru Pavilion, that have been in existence for a similar length of time (if not more) and are strong contenders for the Heritage status for the reasons outlined earlier.

It is all too easy to obliterate for eternity, a structure that has stood the test of time; that is a recognisable part of the city skyline; that harbours the city's history of architecture and engineering norms within its framework.

As is evident from the correspondence these past few years, there is no architect or engineering body that does not reveal a sense of anguish at the imminent destruction of such an iconic structure. I am sure they would only be too happy to apply their expertise and innovative ideas to retain not only the endangered structures but also enlarge the site to include the future requirements at the Pragati Maidan site.

The blueprint of progress and development must allow a seamless juxtaposition of the old and new; the historical and contemporary; iconic and functional. To build on the ruins of history is too simplistic a solution.

On behalf of the IASE, I'd like to strongly support the petition of Mr Mahendra Raj and Mr Raj Rewal and sincerely hope that India Trade Promotion Organisation, Ministry of Commerce will re-think their plans to demolish the Hall of Nations and Nehru Pavilion

Thank you.

Sincerely,

**Prof. Mahesh Tandon**  
Distinguished Visiting Professor, IIT Gandhinagar  
President, Indian Association of Structural Engineers  
President, Indian Society of Wind Engineering