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Title: Regarding excavation by ASI in Keeladi village in Sivaganga Parliamentary Constituency.

SHRI KARTI P. CHIDAMBARAM (SIVAGANGA): Hon. Speaker, Sir, thank you for giving me this opportunity.

I represent Sivaganga in Tamil Nadu. Sivaganga is the land of the fearless queen Velu Nachiyar who fought the British in the late 1700s -- a good 75 years earlier than the more celebrated Jhansi Rani.

Sir, we, in Tamil Nadu, feel that many of our heroes and icons are not acknowledged or celebrated in the rest of India, particularly in the North. Another case in point is Vanchinathan. A young man in the early 1900s who assassinated Ashe, the British tax collector in Tirunelveli.

Sir, today, I would like to draw the attention of this House to Keeladi, a village in Sivaganga. The ASI has been excavating a site in this village. They have made some startling discoveries. They have unearthed signs of a possible civilisation which perhaps predates Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. Another very interesting preliminary finding is that the excavation so far has not unearthed any religious relic. This could possibly mean that this civilisation predates organised religion. Of course, this needs to be validated.

History is a serious subject. It must be studied dispassionately. It cannot be interpreted to suit our present-day ideologies or beliefs. Sir, through you, I have the following points to make as an appeal to the Central Government: the ASI must acquire the 110 acres which needs to be excavated. Adequate and proper compensation must be given to the

present land owners; the 5<sup>th</sup> phase of excavation is being done by the TN Archaeological Department. The ASI must also involve itself in this endeavour; the young officer Amarnath Ramakrishnan, who made the initial discovery, must be brought back to the project; the artefacts numbering about 13,600, unearthed so far that have apparently been sent to Mysore, should be brought back to Tamil Nadu; select artefacts must be sent to Beta Analytic in Florida, USA for carbon testing; the discovery of the excavation must be opened up to international experts; and a parliamentary oversight committee must be formed.

Sir, history must be recorded and interpreted correctly and accurately. The findings of Keeladi will have a far-reaching impact not only on Indian history, but also on world history.

In this age, where at times myths and beliefs are mixed up as history, we owe to the generations to study Keeladi properly. Thank you.

**माननीय अध्यक्ष:** मैं सभी माननीय सदस्यों से आग्रह करना चाहता हूँ कि यह शून्य काल है। शून्यकाल में अपने क्षेत्र की बात संक्षिप्त में कह दें।

**श्री सुदीप बन्दोपाध्याय (कोलकाता उत्तर):** महोदय, पहले शून्यकाल में स्टेट सब्जेक्ट को उठाने देना, यह कभी हाऊस में नहीं होता। State subjects are not allowed to be raised on the floor of the House, if it is on a law and order situation. If it starts, then every Hon. Member will raise matters that comes under their jurisdiction, and then, the purpose of Zero Hour will be a big zero.

I would like to request you to take a strong step in this regard.

**माननीय अध्यक्ष :** माननीय सदस्य, यह संसद है। हमारी कोशिश होनी चाहिए कि हम केन्द्र सरकार या केन्द्र से संबंधित या पूरे देश से संबंधित विषय उठाने

का प्रयास करें । माननीय सदस्य नए हैं, धीरे-धीरे अभ्यास हो जाएगा ।