

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:867

ANSWERED ON:14.08.2012

RETRIEVAL OF STOLEN ANTIQUES

Jawale Shri Haribhau Madhav;Mahato Shri Narahari;Roy Shri Nripendra Nath;Semmalai Shri S.

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether the Government is aware of the increasing incidents of thefts pertaining to antiquities having historical and cultural values;
- (b) If so, the details of antiquities stolen/smuggled from the country and the number of those retrieved/recovered during each of the last three years and the current year;
- (c) Whether it is a fact that poor documentation of antiquities in museums and temples have led to many of the stolen items remaining untraceable;
- (d) If so, the corrective measures proposed to be taken in this regard; and
- (e) The steps taken/proposed to be taken to prevent further thefts of idols/antiquities and curb illicit trading in stolen antiquities?

Answer

Minister for Tourism and Culture (KUMARI SELJA)

- (a) Available information does not indicate that the incidents of theft pertaining to antiquities having historical and cultural values are on the rise.
- (b) Details of antiquities stolen/smuggled from the country are enclosed at Annexure I. In two cases, the stolen articles were recovered, as given in the Annexure.
- (c) to (e) The Government has taken initiative for documenting the protected and unprotected antiquities and monuments through National Mission for Monuments and Antiquities. The Archaeological Survey of India has taken adequate steps to prevent further theft of idols and smuggling of antiquities from the centrally protected monuments, sites and museums by augmenting security. Archaeological Survey of India is also in close liaison with Central Bureau of Investigation, Customs authorities, Department of Revenue Intelligence and Local Police authorities to share information on the smuggling of antiquities. India is also a signatory to the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and preventing illicit import, export and transfer or ownership of cultural property.