

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:274
ANSWERED ON:12.12.2012
BHIKSHAPATRA OF BUDDHA
Singh Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the stone bowl kept at the National Museum of Afghanistan in Kabul is purported to be the Bhikshapatra of Lord Buddha;
- (b) if so, the details thereof including the evidences/documents provided by the historians/scholars/organisations including the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI); and
- (c) the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to recover and bring back the said Bhikshapatra from Afghanistan?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHID)

(a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (c) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NUMBER 274 REGARDING "BHIKSHAPATRA OF BUDDHA" FOR ANSWER ON 12.12.2012.

A large stone bowl, approximately 1 metre in height, 1 metre in diameter, with a thickness of about 18 cms at the top, and weighing around 200-300 kgs with verses from the Qoran in calligraphic script running horizontally along its rim in Arabic and Persian, is presently located at the entrance of the National Museum of Afghanistan in Kabul. It was originally located in Kandahar from where it was moved to Kabul during the regime of former Afghan President Dr. Najibullah. The bowl is purported to be the Bhikshapatra of Lord Buddha.

2. Government had received a photograph of the bowl from Embassy of India in Kabul. The photograph has been examined by Director (Epigraphy- Arabic, Persian), Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Nagpur. In his preliminary observations of the photograph, Director (Epigraphy- Arabic, Persian) has mentioned that the inscriptions on the outer surface of the bowl indicate that the bowl was connected with some Mosque (may be the Jama Masjid) of the city of Kandahar. He has suggested that the bowl should be physically and geologically examined to get more information about its origin.

3. Government is examining, in consultation with ASI, further steps required, if any, to establish the provenance of the bowl.