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Title: Need to preserve the archeological site at Shisupalgarh in Bhubaneswar, Orissa.

SHRI B. MAHTAB (CUTTACK): In the temple city of Bhubaneswar is a place that has only now been rediscovered for the world. It is a historical city that existed 2500 years ago and experts believe that in its heyday, it housed a population of 25 thousand people, more than two times the population of ancient Athens. The excavation at Sisupalgarh which was carried out by a team of archaeologists from Deccan College in Pune, the University of California and the Archaeological Survey of India.

This city is known by its walls, has gigantic structures and gateways. The archaeologists say that their research methods reveal pictures of a huge urban set up, in a much larger area that can possibly be excavated. Prof. B. Lai had carried out the first excavations in Sisupalgarh in 1948. Historians attach great importance to Sisupalgarh because of its close association with the great Kalinga war of Emperor Asoka and the proximity of the ancient city with famous Dhauli hill where Asoka rock edict exists. Historians are of the opinion that this site has the potential to lead to the writing of history.

But it is also in danger. The most important threat to Sisupalgarh today comes from land grabbers. It is high time, therefore, for the Government to ensure that this site is preserved. Adequate steps be immediately taken to make it an encroachment-free zone. I urge upon the Government to direct the Archeological Survey of India to take all possible steps to take possession of the land which in its time was bigger than ancient Athens.