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Title: Regarding taking up the issue to get back the artifacts of the great stupa from London Museum to Amaravati.

SHRI JAYADEV GALLA (GUNTUR): Hon. Deputy Speaker Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity for speaking in Zero Hour. The hon. Prime Minister has recently laid the foundation stone for the new capital of Andhra Pradesh, Amaravati. The capital is given its name from ancient Amaravati town which very close by because it has a great historical significance. The third centre of Buddhist learning was founded in Amaravati by Acharya Nagarjuna in the 2nd century B.C. after Taxila and Nalanda. It was also the capital for the Satavahana Empire between 2nd and 3rd century A.D. The Dalai Lama has also conducted a Kalachakra initiation at this very location in 2006.

During the British Raj, this ancient city was excavated about 140 years ago by Colonel Colin Mackenzie, the first Surveyor General of India and more than 70 artifacts depicting Amaravati sculpture were shipped to London in 1880. Several of these priceless artifacts date back to 2nd century B.C.

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You tell what you want. Please come to the point.

SHRI JAYADEV GALLA: Sir, I am coming to the point. They are classified into four periods ranging from 2nd century B.C. to the 2nd century A.D. These and other sculptures and scriptures once adorned the great stupa at Amaravati and these artifacts are now displayed in Gallery no. 33A at London Museum.

Since Amaravati has become the capital of Andhra Pradesh, the Government of Andhra Pradesh is trying to create a world class museum to showcase the legacy of Amaravati. Hence, I request the Government of India to take up the issue with the Government of U.K. and see that these artifacts are returned to Andhra Pradesh as early as possible. Thank you.