

12:10 hrs.

**ESTIMATES COMMITTEE***[English]***Thirty-Seventh Report**

**SHRIMATI CHANDRA TRIPATHI** (Chndauli) : I beg to present the Thirty-Seventh Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Estimates Committee on the Ministry of Finance, Department of Economic Affairs—Revision of Form and Contents of the Demands for Grants, and Minutes of the sittings of the Committee relating thereto.

12.11 hrs.

**CALLING ATTENTION TO  
MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC  
IMPORTANCE***[English]*

Reported damage caused to invaluable pieces of art sent for exposition at Festival of India held in France and the United States of America

**SHRI PIYUS TIRAKY** (Alipurduars) : I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Human Resources to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon :

“The reported damage caused to invaluable pieces of art sent for exposition at the Festival of India held in France and the United States of America and the action taken by the Government in that regard.”

**THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESO-  
URCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER  
OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**(SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO)** : I welcome this opportunity to clarify the position in regard to the damage to the art objects sent for the Festival of India in USA and France.

Patterned after the highly successful Festival of India organised in U.K. in 1982, the Festivals in USA and France were organised on a larger scale and spread over a wider canvas. In brief they envisaged a unique exposure of India's rich cultural heritage with a view to promoting greater awareness among the American and the French and thus creating an appropriate climate of goodwill and understanding for mutual exchanges in the future.

The events of the Festivals of India included 12 exhibitions of classical art and paintings. The art objects were collected from several private, autonomous and Government museums, with their consent. Several objects which were initially listed for display were dropped, taking into account the adverse conservation report or in view of the fragile condition of the art objects. On the recommendation of the Evaluation and Expert Committee, certain art objects such as Pasupati seal, Dancing girl of Mohan-jo-daro, Torso from Harappa, excluded. In deference to public sentiments, idols of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana were not sent abroad.

In respect of the objects sent abroad, adequate precautions were taken to ensure maximum safety. Apart from the insurance cover on wall-to-wall basis, every care to adhere to international practice has been exercised for packing, handling, transportation, etc. Security precaution e.g. provision of security guards, experts accompanying consignments, were observed.

Director, National Museum has furnished a statement of 26 art objects sent to the Festival of India exhibitions in USA and France which suffered some damage. The final position will be assessed after the return of the art objects from San Francisco some time in the next fortnight.