

(Vidisha) : It is a welcome decision that the Malwa Superfast Express train will run daily between New Delhi-Bhopal and Indore from 1st May, 1985. There is a long-standing demand for the stoppage of this Superfast train at Vidisha station similarly several memoranda and reminders have been submitted by various organisations of my constituency for the stoppage of Dakshin Express at Ganj Basoda.

Vidisha and Ganj Basoda are very good business centres with historical background and also attract foreign and inland tourist traffic for the archeological monuments at Sanchi, Udaigiri, Udaipur Gyara-spur, Kham-baba ect. I would request the Railway Minister to look into the matter for considering these two stoppages at the earliest possible time.

[Translation]

(vii) Need to bring Purnea (Bihar) on the air map of India

SHRI D.L. BAITHA (Araria) : The district of Purnea, on the North Eastern border of Bihar is situated on the border of Nepal. There are still no suitable means of transport in the area as a result of which it is not developing.

Near Purnea, there is a Defence airfield in Chunapur which is not being used now by the Defence Department. It is, therefore, suggested that Purnea may be connected by air service. Delhi-Patna-Calcutta flight or Delhi-Patna-Bagdogra flight can be scheduled via Purnea once or twice a week and thus it can be brought on the air map. Earlier also, the private companies have been running air services from here and earning profit. Therefore, it is expected that it will prove to be a profit earning service and there will be no losses. If it is not possible to do so, it should be linked with Vayu-doot service immediately.

(viii) Need to complete the distributaries in Ganganagar District taking off from Indira Main Canal

SHRI BIRBAL (Ganganagar) : Sir, all the direct minors taken out in Ganganagar district from the Indira Main Canal have been left incomplete and if these the extended further according to the survey, lakhs of

acres of land can be irrigated with bye-flow water. The farmers of that area have been expecting water for their fields for quite a long time. The incomplete minors are as follows :—

1. Rathi Khera Minor
2. Khetanwali distributary
3. Zoravarpura distributary
4. Sardarpura distributary
5. Khonda distributary
6. Khildasari distributary
7. Chulli distributary
8. Thethar distributary
9. Jesamatee distributary
10. Kanhore distributary
11. Bhojewala distributary
12. Somasar distributary, and
13. Piperan distributary.

I would urge the Government of India that these incomplete minors should be completed on a war footing so that the farmers may get irrigation facilities and their backwardness and poverty may be removed and at the same time the country may also have the benefit of more production.

#### CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

[English]

12.10 hrs.

Reported removal and shipping of priceless treasures of Indian art and culture including rare works of sculptures for display during the Festival of India in the United States of America and France.

MR. SPEAKER : Now, we taken up the Calling Attention, Mr. Unnikrishnan. Now, I can diagnose what the Minister was suffering from, namely that he was still used to the old Parliamentary procedure. This is the Eighth Lok Sabha, but he was living in the days of the Seventh Lok Sabha and he did

not understand this. Mr. Minister must understand that we have become wiser. This new Lok Sabha does not take too much time. ..

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN (Badagara) : He must think that we are already in the 21st century.

MR. SPEAKER : We have become wiser and we not waste time in unnecessary things. We do not become busy without work now.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN : I call the attention of the Minister of culture to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon :

"The reported removal and shipping of priceless treasures of Indian art and culture including rare works of sculptures from different Museums, art galleries and temples in India for display during the Festival of India in the United States of America and France with grave risks, and steps taken by Government in that regard."

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL AND TRAINING, ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSION AND DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE (SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO) : I welcome this opportunity to clarify the position in regard to the art exhibitions during the Festival of India.

The Festival of India in France and USA is scheduled to open in June 1985. It will be on a scale much bigger than the one held in London in 1982 and will cover a wider canvas. It will comprise a large number of exhibitions sponsored by some of the most prestigious museums in United States and France which have displayed the greatest art treasures of the world, performing arts, Indian Film 'Festival', theatre groups, poetry readings, symposia and seminars etc. .

Six major exhibitions of classical art are being organised during the Festival of India in USA. They are :

- (1) Sculpture of India 3000 BC to 1300 A.D.

- (2) "India"

- (3) Life at Court : Art for India's Rulers —16th—19 Cent. A.D.

- (4) From Indian Earth : 4000 Years of Terracotta Art.

- (5) Kushan Sculpture.

- (6) Fatehpur Sikri and the Age of Akbar.

The art objects have been collected from 55 private/autonomous and Government museums, besides 9 private collectors with their consent. The process of selection included the examination of the exhibits by experts. As many as 76 out of 441 art objects which were initially listed for display in the exhibitions in USA have been dropped, taking into account the adverse conservation report or due to the fragile condition of the objects. Some of the art objects, which were one of their kind such as Pasupati seal and Dancing girl of Mohanjodaro were also excluded. Thus extraordinary objects of historical or aesthetic importance in the context of history of Indian art were excluded. Barhut Yakshi from Indian Museum and Amarvati Roundal from Madras Museum, which were embedded, have not been selected.

It is customary for Museums of international repute to exchange exhibitions, each side trying to project the best of the country's cultural heritage and also to receive the finest in return. For example, the National Museum New Delhi itself received exhibitions of the finest and priceless works of art such as Thracian Gold from Bulgaria, Art Treasures from Dresden and the National Gallery of Modern Art those of German Expressionist, Paul Klee and sculptures by Rodin. It may also be noted that many nations of the world have sent some of the greatest exhibitions to the United States, France, Britain and Japan, e.g. the exhibitions of Chinese Art Treasures from Tut-Ankh-Amen of Egypt and paintings of Rembrandt. Our country's cultural heritage and image is unique in the world and from times immemorial Indian art has also influenced the styles of the Art of China, South-east Asia and Far-eastern countries. Therefore, what has been selected for the Festival of India constitutes an insignificant proportion of the art works and masterpieces available in the

country. The selection of these art objects for different exhibitions is due to the fact that they are well known in the world of art. In fact exhibitions of such art treasures generate more interest and enthusiasm among scholars and general public in the art and cultural heritage of India.

Apart from obtaining insurance cover on "wall to wall" basis, every care, according to international practice is being exercised in respect of packing, transportation etc. Utmost security precautions have been taken such as valuable exhibits are escorted by armed guards, consignments are accompanied by experts, detailed photographic documentation is made at different stages of the movement of the art objects.

It would, therefore, be observed that all possible precautions have been taken by the Government to ensure the safety and security of the art treasures proposed to be sent to the Festival of India. I might add that considerable enthusiasm has been generated abroad about the art and cultural heritage of India.

**SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN :** Sir, I am amazed at the cool, complacent tone of the statement of the Hon. Minister which can only be compared to the amazing degree of ignorance and misinformation about India, not only contemporary India, our civilisation, our heritage and so on but also about traditions and achievements that exists in the United States of America and in various parts of Europe. Therefore, the idea of a Festival of India as an introduction to India which would correct distortions in their understanding of India was a very welcome idea. We thought that it will project contemporary India, also as a cultural heritage, and traditions and our immense diversity in food, costumes and performing arts.

This Festival which is to last for well over 18 months is funded mostly by the Government of India, that is, from the consolidated Fund of India which, as you know and as we know can only be appropriated and spent with the sanction of Parliament. Therefore, the Government of India and the Festival of India Committee appointed by them is responsible to this Parliament not merely for the way in which the money is

spent but the manner in which the Festival is conducted.

The festival is meant to project India and it cannot be allowed to degenerate into public relations exercise to project someone who has become a sort of cultural commissar, that is, the Chairperson of the Festival of India Committee.

I know, this is not an opportunity to discuss the entire gamut of festival and the very unsavoury details that have come to light about many other aspects of this Festival which have become a game of favorites for the favourites.

I shall only, therefore, confine my remarks in this connection to the decision to remove and shift priceless treasures of Indian art and cultural heritage including the sculptures dating back from Harappan age to Maurya, Gupta, Kushan and Chola periods. I know. I have just seen in the statement—one should be thankful for small mercies that the Chairman of the Festival has not condescended to remove the Budha of Sarnath, as the Minister has said in his statement, and Pashupati Seal to which he has referred is a key to the understanding of history of the entire sub-continent but, believe me, this outrage was only stopped at the personal intervention of the late Prime Minister Shrimati Indira Gandhi but with the tragic death and disappearance of Shrimati Indira Gandhi from the scene, the Chairperson of this Festival has become a riderless horse, raiding every conceivable museum, collection, temple and even excavation sites; like the proverbial Oliver, she asked for more.

From the Patna Museum has gone the celebrated and universally-acclaimed Yakshi of Didarganj of 3rd century BC (Maurya) which along with Gyrapur Yakshi, now probably in Gwalior Museum have been acclaimed as the finest achievements. Here he says that certain objects have been excluded and this is only insignificant contour, according to them. But here these two pieces, according to Shri Aurobindo, are crowning achievements of Indian culture. One of them is going. Bodhisatva is going of 5th century AD and Alasa Kanya of Khajuraho from the National Museum, famous Buddha of Manuwar from Lucknow Museum and the

Standing Ascetic, another unique piece from Mathura Art Museum. The list can go on and I gather, more than, 75 pieces have found their way: some of them awaiting fumigation in distant Baltimore. This is my charge.

In addition, some other priceless achievements of Pallava and Chola periods, priceless Chola bronzes have been knocked off like the Vrisha bha Vahana Murti of 11th century, a classical piece from Tanjore Art Gallery. The Director of Tanjore Art Gallery objected and, what is more, the attack is not confined to the art galleries of the South but to the worshipping temples. From Chidambareswar temple of Vadakalattur, Tanjavur, has gone Kalyanasundaramurti. Of this piece, late Dr. Sivarama Murthy has written. He says that, some of them have been exquisite, aesthetic and extraordinary pieces of historic and aesthetic importance. Dr. Sivarama Murthy than whom there is no better authority of Chola period has written :

"Among the great masterpieces of Pallava sculptures should be mentioned a recently discovered bronze from Vadakalattur in Tanjavur district which presents Siva as Kalyanasundara, the most exquisite, that has so far been found anywhere, so natural and full of life."

Of other temples, the exquisite and famous Rama, Lakshmana and Sita of Paruttiyur and the Kalyanavaradaraja temple have not been left free, or the temples of Azhiyur in Tanjore district.

Shankaracharya of Kanchi has also taken objection to this.

I have it reliably learnt that not only the Director of Tanjore Art Gallery has objected but the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu himself Shri M.G. Ramachandran had written before he fell ill, a letter to Shrimati Indira Gandhi and she promised reconsideration and she said none of them will be taken but he fell ill and now you have a spectacle where Rama idol of Paruttiyur temple has been lifted, to add insult to injury on the Ramnavami day. News items have appeared in the *Hindu Indian Express* and the entire press in the South of Ramnavami without Rama and tremendous local resentment has arisen as a result of that.

Now I refer to the excavation sites. In January-February, 1985, the Archaeological Survey of India recovered in a chance discovery at Sanghol near Chandigarh 117 sculptures, not yet fully cleaned up and exhibited in India. Nobody has seen them except some of these members of the Archaeological Survey of India. It was rare discovery, but I understand that large numbers of them, still not properly catalogued or seen in India, have already been picked up and shipped against expert advice. In an exposition of this kind one can understand a few representative samples being sent. Even that practice has been questioned. The Americans have now the biggest collections of Moghul miniatures; they are in the United States with private collectors and museum: even some of the finest bronzes like the stolen Sivapuram Nataraja which, we are hoping, will come back according to a reply given in this House. Was any effort made to contact these collectors and if so, what was their reply? I want to specifically know this. Let him not evade or avoid this question because it is important for us in terms of Indians; there is no politics in it. What is the agreement that we have with the U.S. authorities and the Museums and art Galleries who are receiving these exhibits? I dare say-I challenge him to disprove me-that to this day no such agreement exists. Then who takes the responsibility, this colossal responsibility, for this shipping, amounting almost to vandalism with all its attendant, grave risks. If the answer is as he has said, that it has been insured, is insurance any substitute for these priceless treasures, the symbols of our civilization? I want to know this: insured by whom and for how much. Who has fixed the insured amount? I am sure they must have given it to a committee of experts to evaluate these pieces before insurance was done. Did they make any evaluation report? If there was a committee of experts who did such an evaluation before insurance cover was done, was there unanimity among them and what report did they give? Is he prepared to lay it on the Table of the House-the evaluation report for the insurance done by these experts?

In cultural exchanges, reciprocity is the key. We sought an exhibition of masterpieces of Louvre Museum of Paris; when Mr. Jacques Chirac was the Prime Minister some

time ago, Mrs. Indira Gandhi personally, I know—when Dr. Nurul Hasan was the Minister of Education—requested that Mona Lisa be sent here. But our request, in spite of the fact that it came persistently from the Prime Minister of India who was held in great esteem in France, was turned down. What have these Americans given us in return? It is true that they are dodging us claiming that they have no money? To cap it all, you have a calendar of events which is unique, published by the Festival of India Committee for circulation...

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : Please repeat that question.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN : It is not a fact that the Americans are dodging us on reciprocal exhibitions claiming that they have no money? To cap it all is the calendar of Events which has been circulated in the United States, published by the Festival of India Committee. Here the exhibits are introduced not with quotations from Rabindranath Tagore as one would have thought or Aurobindo or Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy or Mahatma Gandhi or Jawaharlal Nehru or Indira Gandhi or even the present Prime Minister Shri Rajeev Gandhi, but introduced by Shrimati Pupul Jayakar. The Americans will have to find out who this distinguished person is.

To cap it all, there is an introduction to Lord Siva, Lord Siva with the fabulous concept of non-dimensional God, the only unique concept in the entire history of philosophy, oriental or occidental, unmanifest and uncreated—according to Sankara and a living deity for millions of people in this country is introduced as an 'erotic ascetic'... (Interruptions) You can have a look at it, Sir. Lord Siva—'an erotic ascetic'? ..... (Interruptions) It is nothing but pure blasphemy. If Sankaracharya has protested, if people are agitated all over the country, it is because of this and there you and I have a responsibility because this is largely funded by the Consolidated Fund of India.

Therefore, I repeat the question. Before shipment what are the species that have been shipped, with their specific names and the museum to which they belong, who are the experts who have evaluated them for insurance, were they unanimous and what

were their comments, if any? And in this list, their comments with details and of insurance—will it be laid on the Table of the House? Then have we signed an agreement with the recipient institutions and where are these exhibits now? Are they in the fumigation yards—at least some of them are in Baltimore—or have they reached their destination?

SOME HON MEMBERS : Erotic?

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : Mr. Unnikrishnan, you send that book to him. They want to see.

SHRI G.G. SWELL : Erotic ascetic?

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : I am extremely thankful to the Hon. Member, Shri K.P. Unnikrishnan who, in his inimitable style and his rhetoric, has brought out many points regarding the festival—light to be exact. In fact there has been some duplication. I have got 8 points which have been brought out and in his preamble to the questions which are really 3 in number, he has referred to the 'cool', complacent and ignorant manner' in which the reply has been given by the Government. He has also referred to some of the points which have also come out in the *Indian Express* by a letter written by him to the Editor. ...

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN : Also in *Statesman* and many other papers.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : Anyway, I have got a copy of the *Indian Express* here dated 13.4.85. May I first of all say that this letter—I would not like to say it is a half truth, but I would like to say that it is a travesty of truth?

Firstly, he said that the festival is mostly funded by the Government of India—which is not so. On an earlier occasion I have already replied in this House and also in the other House that the Festival of India is being held both in France and in USA and that as far as USA is concerned, our expenses will be about Rs. 515 lakhs approximately as of to-day and on the American side, various organisations there will be spending more than 12 million dollars and by to-day's rate, which is, I think, Rs.

13.50. or 14, it comes to Rs. 18 crores as against Rs. 5 crores by India.

**SHRI K.P. UNNIKRIISHNAN :** You have got the money already ?

**SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO :** Then he has also referred to appropriation by Parliament. This has been reflected in the various appropriations passed by Parliament. Apart from the Ministry of Culture, there are various other Ministries which are also associated with this Festival of India and these appropriations have been passed by Parliament last year also.

Then he has referred to it as some public relations exercise for the Chair-Person of the Festival of India. The person is not present here and it would be—I would appeal to his gallantry and I am sure gallantry is not dead here in India nor chivalry—this is not a public relations exercise at all for anybody—neither for the Chair-person nor for anybody else. Only this is one of the biggest events as far as India-US relations are concerned as far as creating an awareness and more consciousness both in USA and India for culture is concerned and this is a unique opportunity for the people of India and the Government to help in creating this between the two largest democracies of the world. We have a continuous culture of more than 5,000 years. This has given us a unique opportunity. This was decided not today but when our former Prime Minister late Mrs. Indira Gandhi had gone in 1982, President Reagan and Mrs. Gandhi had agreed then that Festival of India will take place in America in 1985. So, this is consequent upon that and it is not PR exercise for anybody.

Then the second point is this; he gave us some unsavoury details about games of favourites. I don't think there is any game of favourites in this thing at all. It is like giving the dog a bad name and hanging it. I do not think it has any relevance. In fact he never substantiated any of the games of favourites at all.

Then he mentioned about removing and stripping priceless articles and objects of art. This has not happened so far. I can assure you, nothing is going to be removed and stripped from anywhere,—temple,

museum or from any gallery or anything. I would like to assure the House about this.

Then he mentioned about intervention of our late Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi about the Buddna and Pasupathi last time; and he said something about the riderless horse, I think it could not be farther from the truth. There is no riderless horse at all. There is no question of sending some of our priceless things. In fact it has happened that sometimes those objects of art which are well known have already been around; especially some of these objects of art have gone to Japan and to the Festival of India in London. They are being sent again. So, there is nothing new in it. It has already gone to England in 1982. It has already gone to Japan. The same objects have gone and the same objects are going this time too. There was no hue and cry when it went to Japan. I don't know why such a hue and cry is made now when the same objects are going to the United States.

Then he referred to Sanghol and the Yakshi. I have already said in my statement about Yakshi. About Sanghol it would be an interesting point to know that although 117 objects were found, only 5 of them are sought to be cleared. It is under the consideration of the Government. It has not gone so far. We are consulting our experts. I will give the names of the experts which the Hon. Member has asked for. It is only after consulting them that Government will decide whether it could go and how many pieces will go.

He also referred to some things finding their way to Baltimore and fumigation. I would like to say that fumigation has been completed at Baltimore and the exhibits have reached National Gallery, Washington. They are not lying anywhere or sprawling around as he tried to imply.

He mentioned about Vrishab Vahana and the items which are being worshipped in temples. None of these has gone out. These objects are being evaluated and after the evaluation is done, then the Government will decide about it. They will decide about the 9 bronzes on which the Tamil Nadu Government at first agreed, then again they

changed their mind; again they have reconsidered and have cleared all the 9 bronzes. Government will decide whether these 9 bronzes should go or not. Final decision will be taken.

He referred to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. I have already answered that. The Tamil Nadu Government, especially the Chief Minister, had considered and again reconsidered and now the Government of Tamil Nadu has cleared all the 9. So, this will be decided upon.

The third point was of excavation of site at Sangol and that also I have answered. His fourth question was on the agreement.

**SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN :** Only two questions I had asked specifically. When I summed up I put two questions only and if you want me to repeat them...

**SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO :** You have repeated those questions three or four times and they became eight. Now, he has asked what is the agreement with the USA and he was telling that there was no agreement existing today and there was shipping vandalism. Sir, I would like to say here that Carter Brown who is going to exhibit these bronze statues and sculpture objects of art at the National Gallery has given a written undertaking with the Festival of India and the agreement between the USA and India is yet to be signed and it is only after it is signed, that the objects will go. I would like to assure the House of this. (*Interruptions*)

**SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN :** Those which had been signed had gone.

**SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO :** Those which have not yet been signed have not gone.

**SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN :** Will you please give details ?

**SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO :** There are many different institutions which are holding the exhibits.

**SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN :** Will you please give the details of what has been signed and what has not been signed ?

**SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO :** As I said, more than 70 objects have gone.

**SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN :** You can give the details later.

**SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO :** I will give it later definitely. Now, about the insurance, since there are more than 76 articles, insurance had been made and the amount for the entire quantity is approximately between Rs. 70 and Rs. 80 lakhs. This is the insurance amount for the objects which will go out.

**SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN :** Crores or lakhs ?

**SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO :** That is a matter of opinion. We have to go by our experts, not by your opinion. If you were expert on that...

**SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN :** Are you talking about the premium paid or the insured amount ?

**SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO :** I am talking about the premium, not the insured amount. There are more than 70 objects. Whatever is possible to be laid on the Table of the House, I will lay them.

**SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN :** Is it not the whole list that you would be laying on the Table of the House ?

**SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO :** Whatever is possible to be laid on the Table of the House, I will lay them. But if you start asking everything to be laid on the Table of the House, it is not possible to lay them all on the Table of the House.

**SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN :** I asked about the list.

**SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO :** Therefore, whatever is possible to be laid on the Table of the House, I shall certainly lay them on the Table of the House. Then, he wanted to know about the Committee of Experts. Now, the names of the Members of the Committee for evaluation of works of art for insurance purposes are : Shri Karl J. Khandalawala, Chairman, Board of Trustees, Prince of Wales Museum, Dr. P. Banerjee, former

Assistant Director, National Museum, Dr. M.S. Nagaraja Rao, Director General, Archeological Survey of India, Dr. L.P. Sihare, Director, National Museum. The names of experts of Conservation and Restoration are : Shri A.S. Bhisht, Chief Restorer, Shri O.P. Aggarwal, Head, National Conservation Laboratory and Mr. B.N. Tandon, Director, Science and Archeological Survey of India. I have just received information that the insured amount is Rs. 120 crores for 84 objects and the premium comes to about Rs. 80 lakhs.

*(Interruptions)*

Then he said that the Americans were dodging. I really do not know what they are dodging.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRIISHNAN : I asked what were the comments of the members of the expert committee whose names have been given. Were they unanimous in their comments ? That was my specific question.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : Government is guided by expert committees; it is not mandatory on Government to accept their recommendations. Government is only guided by that. I will come back on that also. We have consulted the expert Committee and we are guided in our decision. The final decision rests with the Government.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRIISHNAN : What did they say ? What were their comments.

SHRI SOMNATH RATH : Once again, I invite your attention to Rule 197; can there be a sentence by sentence debate in a calling attention ?

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRIISHNAN : I want answer to my specific question. He has given the names of the members of the committee, who evaluated those objects for insurance. Were they unanimous and what were their comments to the Government ? I have posed a specific question and nothing else.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : What is possible to be told in the House, I will do that. It is for the Government to take a decision. It is an expert committee of advisors; it is to aid the Government to arrive at a decision. It is not possible for me to lay everything on

the Table of the House. That would set a very wrong precedent.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRIISHNAN : Are you claiming that it is not in public interest.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : It will be a bad precedent, which can create difficulties later...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRIISHNAN : Is he claiming that it is not in public interest ?...*(Interruptions)*.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : I am only claiming that this is a body of experts; it has to advise the Government to arrive at a decision.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRIISHNAN : What were their comments ? Was there unanimity ?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : He says that the Government takes a decision on the basis of such recommendations; whether there is unanimity or not. And it is left to the Minister; if he wants to reveal something, he will do that and if does not want, he will keep it away.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : The Government can withhold information only on one ground, when the Minister says that in the interest of State, this information cannot be given. There is no other ground which Government can withhold information.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRIISHNAN : I am not asking for a military secret; I am not asking for an intelligence report.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, you know the feelings of the citizens of Tanjore; I am only reflecting their concern, concern of everyone of us in the House, about out priceless treasure of art which are exhibited there. If I ask what is the expert opinion, am I asking for an intelligence report, or some document of confidential nature, or some military secret ? If he says that in the public interest, it is not possible to give this information, I will sit down.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : A member cannot insist on the Minister to reveal something which he does not want to reveal.

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER :** Let the Minister answer the question; please sit down.

**PROF. P.J. KURIEN :** In a calling attention, a Member can ask one or two questions.

**SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN :** I am asking for clarifications only...*(Interruptions)*.

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER :** Please sit down; the Minister is on his legs. I would request all the Members to take their seats. No further discussion. Let the Minister reply.

*(Interruptions)*

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER :** No Please. Mr. Kurien, please sit down. The Minister is on his legs. He is replying.

**SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO :** I am not going to set a bad precedent. I am sorry. *(Interruptions)* You are most welcome to your views. He wanted to know who Shrimati Pupul Jayakar was. She is the Chairperson of the Festival of India Committee. She is a very distinguished person, and she has been associated with the promotion of various arts and crafts of India for the last four and a half decades. She is a very distinguished person. I am only very sorry for the knowledge which the Hon. member has regarding the Chairperson of the Festival of India Committee. There are three committees, one in the United States, one in France and one here. Shrimati Jayakar happens to be the chairperson of the Committee which conducted the Festival of India Exhibition in London. There is the one for France as well as for the United States. Sir, I have answered all the points which have been raised by the Hon. member.

**SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN :** I am on a point of order. Please refer to page No. 413, Kaul and Shakhder—"Whenever a Minister makes a statement in response to a calling attention notice, he is expected to answer all the points that might have been raised in the short notice questions or any other questions raised in the motion." Therefore, he has not answered my question. As I said, he can take a plea and say that it is not in the public interest. Then I will sit down. I have asked a specific question.

**SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN:** Is it in relation to calling attention ?

**SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN :** Yes. It is Shri Anantasayanam Ayyangar's old ruling. Therefore, he has not replied to the point that I have raised. When specific things are asked, they must be answered adequately. As I have said, I am not seeking any secret. I have said, that it has been insured. He has also told us that the following members constituted a committee. Now my question was whether their recommendation was unanimous while certifying that it was fit to be shipped and while they specified the amount to be insured and so on, were they unanimous? If not, there will be two opinions. What were their comments and advice to Government? That is all. That is the specific question that he must answer or take the plea that it is not in public interest.

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER :** The Minister told you. Sometimes, he is not willing to reveal certain things

*(Interruptions)*

**SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO :** Here is a group of experts on whose saying, the Government will have to decide. It will be setting a bad precedent. It is not a question of giving away defence secrets. He is not asking for defence secrets. But I would not like to set a bad precedent, whereby the internal notings of the Government of India are placed on the table of the House. It will have serious repercussions and this can lead to asking questions on defence secrets also.

**SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN :** I am not asking for ministerial notings. There is a difference between ministerial notes and the advice of a group of experts. If it is ministerial notings, I would not ask.

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER :** Mr. Unnikrishnan, he is telling that after the experts opinions, the Ministry has taken certain decisions. There may be some differences among the members. They will take a final decision on the opinions given by the Committee.

**SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN :** It is not that. That is the point.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : There may be some information which he is not interested in revealing further. He does not want to create a precedent. When he feels that it is not necessary to reveal something, we cannot insist upon the Minister in this regard.

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRIISHNAN : What is the whole business of Parliament about ?

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: He is setting a dangerous precedent. If you find it embarrassing, you better maintain silence.

13.00 hrs.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : His opinion is that in the Committee meetings, there may be so many things, but Government is taking a good, favourable and also justifiable decision. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO : On certain aspects, Government have not taken a final decision. These decisions will be taken, based on the advice and evaluation, but as I said, the advice and evaluation are not mandatory. Government will have the final say. So, the decisions have not been taken, and I would like to set the precedent of giving the notings of the advice to Government to be placed on the Table of the House.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : He is saying that a final decision has not been taken. The Minister has not taken a final decision. Therefore, you need not necessarily insist. Therefore, leave it at that.

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRIISHNAN : Sir, you should not be a party to diluting accountability.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Not at all. No. I say that the Minister is saying that the decision has not been taken.

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRIISHNAN : If that is so, we have nothing to say.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : When a decision is taken, you have the right to ask why Government has taken such a kind of decision. But the Minister is telling that the decision has not been taken.

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRIISHNAN : It has

been taken, Sir. Probably you have not listened.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: No the Minister is telling so. When he is telling so, I cannot do anything. He is on record that the decision has not been taken.

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRIISHNAN : You have come a little late, Sir. Things have been shipped;

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : The Minister is saying that...

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRIISHNAN : You were listening, Sir. You did not probably follow.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You wanted some clarification. Members may differ on whether there was unanimity. Whatever decision is taken will be based on the advice .. But the Minister has said that he has not taken any decision Then what is the purpose of asking what took place in the meeting ?

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO I have concealed nothing In respect of whatever, Members had asked for, whatever information I am able to give, I have given to the Hon. House. (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : If too many Members speak, I cannot hear. One by one please.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO (Parvathipuram) : To set the record straight, I would like to make a submission.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Is it related to the calling attention ? Regarding calling Attention, I cannot allow you . . .

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO : I am on a point of order relating to the proceedings of this House.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : What is the point of order ?

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO : My point of order is this : Irrespective of the information required with regard to a particular subject, every Member in this House has the right to call for information

and demand from the Minister certain information that he requires, unless it is against the interests of national security, or it is a Defence secret, or it is something which, the Minister or the person concerned feels, is against the interests of the country ..

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : There is no point of order, because he has already clarified the whole thing. Whatever the Members wanted, he has clarified . (*Interruptions*).  
Please sit down.

Mr. Jaipal Reddy, you carry on.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO : Let me complete. We are not asking for any notings of the Ministry.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : There is no point of order. Please sit down.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO : We want to know the findings of the Committee set up by the Government. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN : It cannot become a precedent. How can it be precedent. He is just taking a plea.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please sit down. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY (Mahabubnagar) : A lot of ground has already been covered by our esteemed colleague, Mr. Unnikrishnan. We welcome the idea of the Festival of India to be held both in USA and in France. But what is very intriguing and ironical is that in the matter of an exhibition, they are interested in observing strict secrecy. In a report that appeared in *The statesman* only yesterday, the correspondent stated that he was prevented from taking snaps of the art pieces which were being air-lifted and shipped to USA.

I would like the Hon. Minister to answer as to why the government or the authority concerned in the matter or the powers that be are trying to keep the whole thing secret. Just now, my Hon. friend, Shri Unnikrishnan, referred to the manner in which the idol was removed from the temple. The Minister, I understand, has denied it. But it

appeared in a newspaper. You are from Tamilnadu. It has appeared in *The Hindu*. It has caused sensation there. I am quoting from *The Hindu* dated April 11. It reads as follows :

“His Holiness Sri Jayendra Saraswathi of Kanchi Kamakoti Peedam regretted the removal of some deities from the temple at Parithiya village in Thanjavur district to the US for exhibition, and asked the Government to stop forthwith such practices which violated the sanctity attached to these deities.”

So, the Minister should say whether they have been removed from the temple or not; whether he was merely referring to the fact that they have not been shifted to the US.

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN : It has been removed and brought to Delhi.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : I think he tried to draw a subtle distinction between the two. In the first place, nobody has the authority to remove an idol from a temple under the Antiquity and Art Act 1972, Section 19 sub-section 7. It reads as follows :

“The power of compulsory acquisition conferred by this section shall not extend to any object being an antiquity or art treasure used for *bonafide* religious places.”

So, I would like the Minister to explain how in the first place, these idols were removed from a temple. In the report read out by the Minister, he admitted, originally a list of 441 items was prepared. I would like to know whether this list includes such things as Buddha of Sarnath, as Madura Buddha in Rashtrapati Bhawan. I would like to know whether such things can be even included initially in the list. Does this government have any idea about pricelessness of these articles ?

I am only reminded of the famous statement of Carlyle made in the 19th century. He said if a choice was to be made between the British Empire and Shakespear he would prefer the whole of British Empire. You must remember that Carlyle was a great champion

of colonialism and he made this statement when the British imperial glory was at its zenith. Therefore, could a thing like Buddha of Sarnath be initially included in the list at all. He has not mentioned which were the terra-cotta figures that were shifted to USA. He says that all these things are in vogue; whenever exhibitions are held, such objects are shifted. Just now, Mr. Unnikrishnan referred to the manner in which the Paris Museum refused to make certain objects available.

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO : When did he refer to it ? He never referred.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : He referred to Mona Lisa.

SHRI K. P. UNNIRKISHNAN : I referred to the statement of the late Shrimati Indira Gandhi, the former Prime Minister; she requested the then Prime Minister of France and Dr. Nurul Hasan was the Minister of Education.

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO : Did you refer to any statement ? I am sorry you did not.

SHRI K. P. UNNIKISHNAN : He wanted an exhibition to be held abroad where exhibits like Mona Lisa were to be displayed.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : I would like to know from the Minister whether he is aware of the tradition of the US Museum, Smith Sonjan Museum not to make their objects available for display anywhere.

SHRI BRAJAMOHAN MOHANTY : I am on a point of order. Under rule 197 (2) a Member is allowed to ask only a question and there cannot be a debate on the statement made by the Minister. The Hon. Member is asking the second question. What is your ruling ?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please sit down. He is putting the question.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : He has refused to take the House into confidence in regard to the opinion expressed by the experts. He cannot refuse to withhold the

information except on the ground that the disclosure of that information would be detrimental to the interest of the State. I am using the word 'State' in the sense of political science. I am interested in bringing this to the notice of the House that the experts of this Committee, at least some of them, have placed on record that some art treasures should not be sent at all. The Minister should tell the House as to whether such an opinion was recorded by the experts. The Minister has just now stated that the Government is still examining the opinion expressed by the experts. The Government cannot examine the opinion of the experts in regard to 76 articles that have already been sent away. Did Government take any decision in regard to those articles ? Were those articles shipped to USA without the Government taking any decision at all ? Who are the members of the Festival Committee ? How many times did the Festival Committee meet ? Did the Chairperson take all the decisions ? Did Chola Bronzes include apart from Vrishabha Vahana Murthy, Kishabahva Devar consort ? What is the decision of the Government in regard to these art pieces ?

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO : After hearing the whole Ramayana if he asks who is Sita, I am at a discount. Anyway, I will try to answer some of the points which have not been raised earlier.

I would like to reiterate once again that Government is not impervious to the feelings of the people whether of South India or North India or the whole of India or the experts. He said that some of the idols had been removed. Nothing has been removed. Experts of Indian origin, who are living abroad, have come. Curators of various Museums have also come. They have identified certain art objects, paintings, etc. It is not that just because they have identified something, we are falling on bended knees and giving it to them. Government is considering each item on its merit. It is also guided by the experts committee. Then there are three or four underlying principles which are applied before it gives its final decision whether an object ought to go or ought not to go. If the object is the only one of its kind, generally it is not allowed to go. But if the same thing has gone to London and Japan, it is only going to the third place. And in certain cases Government has agreed.

Secondly, from the Conservation point of view and from the fragility point of view, I have already said this in my opening remarks, in my answer to the Calling Attention. If the hon. Member was attentive, he would have noted that I have answered most of the point which he has raised now. Thirdly, from the point of view whether we would like these to go out or not, he has asked about Vrishabha Vahana and Kishabahva Devar Consort. As I said, these are still under consideration of the Government. Then, Sir, he has said that some 70 or 80 have gone out, this also is misleading the House. The Government cannot consider those which have already gone out, Government is considering those which are still here. It is only after consideration that these will go out or not. There is no question of its going without Government considering it.

**SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY :** The Minister is correcting himself, Sir. He said that with regard to the opinions expressed by experts, the Government was still considering. Does he mean to say that 76 precious articles have already been shifted to U. S. A. without the Government taking a decision ?

**SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO :** If he cannot understand, what can I do. Sir ? I am not a professor of English.

**SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY :** At this rate, Sir, I should be a professor in English because I cannot make him understand.

**SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO :** It is not my mother tongue. Anyway, he wanted to know who were on the Festival of India Committee. I say, there are three committees. If he wants I can read out all the names. There is a Committee in the United States, there is a Committee in France, there is a Committee in India.

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER :** You can lay them on the Table.

**SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY :** What about the violation of the Act ?

**SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO :** What violation ? We are violating no Act. Government of India has not removed anything, it has not violated any Act... . (Interruptions).

**SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY :** He is attracting a privilege notice, Sir. I have thrown a distinction between the removal of idol from the temple and the shipment of the same to USA. This idol may not have been shifted to USA. Does it mean that the idol has not been removed from the temple ?

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER :** It is not removed, he is telling.

**SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO :** Government of India has not removed anything from anywhere.

**SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN :** If the Government of India has not removed, then who has removed it from the Paruttiyur Temple ?... (Interruptions).

**SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA :** You constitute a committee of the Members of the Lok Sabha to go and see.....(Interruptions).

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER :** Please sit down, all of you

**SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO :** Sir, one point which I have not answered, I would like to answer now. He has referred to a statement from the *Statesman*. I am sorry to say it is travesty of the truth. Everything which appears in newsprint may not be factual. In fact, no one was prevented from taking photographs of anything. I am told that when they were asked to keep on doing rehearsal of taking the photographs, the people refused to do that. They declined to do that.

**SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY :** Not a single photo was allowed to be taken.

**SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN :** Who has removed these idols from the temple ? .....(Interruptions).

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER :** Be precise in what you want to say.

**SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY :** Sir, firstly, you must have read the news item that Ram Navami was celebrated without Rama, which Unnikrishnan Ji has also referred to. You must have also read the news item in which

His Holiness Shankaracharya has condemned the removal of idol from the temple. To this day, the Government has not denied this item. Even now the Minister does not refer to this. He merely says, the Government has not removed anything.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN : There is a question coming up tomorrow from Shri Chidambaram on this specific issue ... (*Interruptions*).

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : I would not allow other Members to go on speaking. Please sit down all of you. Mr. Reddy, what further clarifications do you want ?

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : The Minister has not categorically denied that the idol was removed from the temple. I have also referred to the legal position in this regard.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : He is telling that the Government has not removed anything from the temple.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : It is not the Government that does, it is the Festival Committee which has removed it.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : Neither the Festival of India Committee nor the Government has removed anything from anywhere. The institutes which are in control of it have handled it themselves.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN : He is saying that the temple people have handed it over.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : He says the institutes have done it.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You are discussing about that particular Committee.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : I am referring to the removal of the idols from the temple for shipment to the USA for display at the exhibition.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN : That is the point.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : What he

is telling is that neither the Committee nor the Government have removed this idol or anything which you are referring to. That is all. That is very clear.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : No, that is not clear.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHURY : He has to admit whether it has been removed or not. That is the question.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You are raising the question regarding the Festival of India and you have asked whether the Government have removed the idols or not. He says, no.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHURY : If the Government of India has not removed, who has removed ? The Minister must state that.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : It is very easy, but you do not understand. In call attention, I cannot allow this. That is all over. We are going to the next item.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : No further discussion. I am not allowing anyone. Please sit down.

SHRI S. SINGARAVADIVEL : Regarding the removal of idols of deities from Paruthiyur temple, I may say that some pieces of idols of deities were kept there for safe custody. I understand only those have been taken out.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : I do not want any further discussion on this. All of you please sit down. We now go to the next item-discussion and voting on the Demands for grants for the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Shri Digvijay Singh.

(*Interruptions*).

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : The Member is on his legs, I will request all of you to take your seats.