

the constitutional obliteration of the Central Government to ensure that the welfare of the people, particularly, the powers to be given to the Panchayat local bodies are strengthened. Also we have to see that these grass-root level organisations are going to be effective. I can say, instead of saying that it is a centralisation, we have to clearly say that it is the decentralisation effort. This is the first time it has happened and this wide ranging consultations have never happened. It is for the first time it has happened during the tenure of this Prime Minister's regime.

For that purpose, all of us should congratulate the Prime Minister. For the benefit of the Hon. Members I can say that. It is true that some States are not holding the panchayat elections on time and in such circumstances, the question whether the Central Government has got the responsibility to hold the elections on time. If there is a constitutional obligation to have the elections on time, for example, there is a constitutional provision in the Constitution to have mandatory elections for State Legislatures and also for the Parliament; because of that, the elections are being held. Now, there are provisions in the Statutes of the States. But in spite of that, the elections are not being held. Now, in such circumstances what have we to do? Whether it is in Congress-ruled States or non-Congress-ruled States, we have to hold the elections on time. That is the purpose; that is the intention of the Hon. Prime Minister.

Return of Buddhist Sculptures from Britain

*659. SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Union Government have made any attempts to get back very important Buddhist sculptures of Amaravathi and Ghantasala in Andhra Pradesh from the British Archaeologists taken away by them long time back; and

(b) if so, with what result?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI L.P. SHAHI): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. The Government of India made efforts and succeeded in getting on long term loan basis, four important Buddhist sculptured panels of Amaravati from Britain in 1970, which are on display in the National Museum, New Delhi. However, no authentic list of important sculptures, if any, taken away to Britain in the past from Ghantasala is available.

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI: Sir, May I know on what basis, the loan agreement has been arrived at between the Government of India and the so-called Archaeologists? Is it a long-term loan? Does it mean that we are going to return those sculptured panels or what? What is the object of this loan?

SHRI L.P. SHAHI: Sir, a loan presupposes some right continuing on it. That is there. That can be understood. But there is no definite policy related to it. Therefore, we say, it is a thing on a long-term loan basis.

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI: Sir, it is reported that a large number of sculptured panels of not only Amaravati and Ghantasala in Andhra Pradesh but also in many parts of the country have been taken away by the British Government. Today they are on display in British Museum which everybody knows, which I myself have seen and many of the hon. Members who had visited there have seen that they are on display. Has he made any claim on them? Has he negotiated with the Government of Britain to see at least some of them are returned?

SHRI L.P. SHAHI: Sir, it is a fact that during the Britishers long stay in India, not only the Government but also individuals took away many sculptures from this country. Here it is a question of identifying the particular sculptures from Amaravati and claiming them. Before 1947, there was no Act providing for the export of sculptures. For the first time in 1947, the Act came into existence which restricted the export of

sculptures from India and anybody exporting the sculptures had to take permission. Thereafter, another Act was passed by this august House in 1972, which is known as the Antiquities Art and Treasures Act, whereby further provision was made in the Law that anybody dealing with antiquities, anybody possessing antiquities or any institution or museum or private collection having antiquities should take permission and declare what antiquities it has in its possession.

Therefore, now it is possible to get back something which can be identified easily. But things which were taken away during a long span of 200 years or more and on different occasions and from different places in the country, it is difficult to get them back. The 1972 Act was passed at the instance of UNESCO. UNESCO wanted every country to have such an Act so that there is no illegal flow of antiquities. Something that went away before that, it is difficult to get it back.

SHRI BRAJAMOHAN MOHANTY: A number of very important objects of art and sculptures have been taken from Konarak and different places in Orissa. The hon. Minister is narrating the story about the statutes that have been passed in this country after 1947. I doubt whether the statutes passed in India will be applicable to other countries. So, it is a matter of negotiation. We have to negotiate and press our demands including for Kohinoor Diamond which belonged to Ranjit Singh who contributed it to Lord Jagannath of Puri. There should not be piecemeal negotiations. May I know from the hon. Minister whether he has prepared a comprehensive list of these objects as per his knowledge that have been taken away by the Britishers? Have any negotiations taken place seriously to get them back?

SHRI L.P. SHAHI: Sir, I said about the statutes in order to point out that after those statutes have been passed in India it may be easier for us to get back something which has been illegally stolen, smuggled or taken away from India.

Now, Sir, many things have been taken away from this country like sculptures, etc. When we try, what they say is. "A piece of art is a joy for all and not only for you alone." So, it is difficult to get back a piece of art. But in case some sentiment is attached to some particular sculpture or item, that we can claim and get back just as we got back the assets of Sariputa and Muglain more than 30 years back from the British Museum because we could have a special claim on it. But an art object is a joy for all and nobody wants to part with that. No nation wants to part with that once it has gone into its possession.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Is it not a fact that many pieces of art taken away by archeologists of Britain had an Imperialist context and they had taken a lot of our properties, sculptures and many other valuables as a loot during the Imperialist rule. Noting this background, I would like to ask the question about two specific items. I agree with what Shri Brajamohan Mohanty said that there should be negotiation. But is it not a fact that there are certain valuable with historical background and emotional loyalty which are lying in the Museum in England today and, if so, whether he will make efforts to negotiate and bring them back? First is the famous and historical Bhawani Sword used by Shivaji Maharaj which is still lying in the British Museum. The former Chief Minister, Mr. A.R. Antulay had declared that he had completed all preparations to bring it back. I would like to know whether those preparations are going on?

The second is the famous Kohinoor diamond which is considered to be a very valuable substance. It is important not only in terms of value but it is also important in terms of history and significance.

So, will he continue other negotiations, not getting entangled in all these legal battles and try to see that especially those things which are of historical and emotional significance are brought back to India?

AN. HON. MEMBER: At least on loan basis.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Don't talk about loan basis because they may lift you tomorrow and put you in the museum and return as only a loan.

SHRI L.P. SHAHI: If you persist thinking like that, that is possible.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: I have mentioned about two specific things of historical importance, namely, the Bhavani Sword and Kohinoor Diamond. What is the reply?

[Translation]

I can say that we will pursue such things in future.

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: If somebody loots something and later on the person is apprehended, all the articles he had taken away are recovered from him. They have not taken away those articles legally and we have also not given them as presents. They had taken them forcibly. They had captured power forcibly and we also got back the same forcibly. It is for them to return the articles honestly. these are the articles of booty.
[English]

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: After the partition of India, the looted property had been returned.

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: If something is looted, it has to be returned.

(Interruptions)

[English]

Employment Potential of Panthal Dead Burned Magnesite Plant

*662. **SHRI MOHD. AYUB KHAN** (Udhampur): Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the employment potential of the proposed Dead Burned Magnesite plant at Panthal (Jammu and Kashmir State);

(b) the ratio of local employment vis-a-vis non State employment;

(c) the total capital investment and share of the State Government;

(d) the number of persons from Jammu and Kashmir state presently working in the National Mineral Development Corporation Limited;

(e) the time by which work on the project is likely to be started; and

(f) the estimated expenditure on the project?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI M.L. FOTEDAR): (a) to (f). A Statement is given below.

STATEMENT

(a) The Detailed Project Report (DPR) for this project is still under preparation. Preliminary estimates indicate an employment potential of around 300 persons.

(b) There is no prescribed or fixed ratio for local employment vis-a-vis non-State employment.

Prescribed guidelines will be followed when recruitment of staff is done.

(c) The total capital investment will be known after the DPR is ready. Preliminary estimates indicate that this investment would be of the order of Rs. 30 Crores.

(d) 4 persons.

(e) Preliminary work on this project has already commenced. However, the work will be taken up on full scale after the DPR is approved.