

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : May I appeal to the hon. Members not to be impatient on this? I am merely quoting. I did not introduce any meaning of mine. I just read the provision. Now you are interpreting it. I am not interpreting it.

AN HON. MEMBER : It is flowing to the sea.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : It is in the interest of the country to utilise the water that is flowing to the sea. I agree with the hon. Members that this nation cannot afford to waste water which is scarce and precious. If water is flowing to the sea without being used, we must make use of it....(*Interruption*).

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA ROA : That is what we are doing.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : That is what I am saying and you are not prepared to listen to me.... (*Interruption*)

MR. SPEAKER : Again you are speaking.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : This cannot be done unless the Chief Ministers of all the three States come together to resolve the differences.

MR. SPEAKER : Next question now...

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : I have already admitted it for discussion....

(*Interruption*)

SHRI E. AYYAPU REDDY : Sir, you have not given us even a single opportunity to ask a supplementary.... (*Interruption*).

MR. SPEAKER : I have given you a full discussion. I have allowed you a discussion on it. What else do you want?

SHRI AMAL DATTA : You should not lose your temper like this, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER : This is unnecessary. Something should be done. I have to make

it heard. That is all. It is for you. I am not getting it for myself. You have demanded it.

[*Translation*]

Even otherwise, I have bad threat today but you are forcing me to speak and it may go worse.

[*English*]

Seizure of rare Idols in Mathura

*248. SHRI SUBHASH YADAV
Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether rare idols worth Rs. 1 crore were seized during raids in Mathura during the last week of October, 1985;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI SUSHILA ROHATGI) : (a) State Police have reported that following a raid on a house in Mathura on 27/10/1985 they seized some statues, the value of which has still to be assessed.

(b) The seized objects which are in police custody are said to include stone sculptures and terracotta figures. Detailed inventory has yet to be prepared.

(c) The Police have registered a case against the accused.

[*Translation*]

SHRI SUBHASH YADAV : With regard to the reply given by the hon. Minister, I want to State that he has not categorically said in his reply whether anybody has been arrested or not. I want to bring to his notice that this is a highly organised gang and, I think, his Ministry is not taking this matter seriously, because it is now more than a month since this seizure was made, but the value of the

articles recovered has not been assessed so far. Therefore, I want to know from the hon. Minister as to what information she has obtained in this regard?

SHRIMATI SUSHILA ROHATGI

Sir, the Ministry is talking up this matter seriously. One Shri Vijay Prakash Aggarwal was arrested during the raid conducted on 27th in Lal Darwaza locality in Mathura. The police have registered a criminal case in this connection and further investigation is going on. Besides, the Deputy Superintendent of Police and the Archaeologist (Agra) had gone there for thorough investigations. It was then found that all these articles were packed in a gunny bag and the bag was sealed and it was because of that it was not possible for them to inspect them. But, nevertheless, this case is with the police. Sir, in this connection, one thing more which I want to add is the Director General of Archaeological Survey of India, who is the competent authority will inspect these articles and decide whether they are antiques or not. If they are antiques what is their value; if they are not, a thorough investigation would be conducted as these articles are in the police custody. In the meantime, an inquiry has also been ordered to be conducted by the C.I.D., Lucknow. This is the stage of the investigations at present. They have been arrested and investigations are going on; the case is with the police.

SHRI MANVENDRA SINGH : Hon. Speaker, Sir, Mathura is an ancient religious place and there are a number of ancient temples and places of archaeological importance even in the villages. The museum in Mathura has a large collection of Kushan and Holkar and this is not the first time that a theft of rare idols has been detected; such incidents occur quite often there. A gang has been operating there for the last 10 years which commits thefts of idols in ancient places in the villages and in big temples. Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister to take stern action in the matter, because theft of idols have become a common feature and nobody has so far been arrested.

SHRIMATI SUSHILA ROHATGI : I agree with the hon. Member that thefts

are being committed there frequently, but we have adopted stringent measures to check such thefts. We have increased the number of circles from 10 to 18 and have also set up a shelter for Safety Guards Protection. Still, we feel that this is not enough. These are priceless articles. Archaeological Act has also got some lacunae. We are reviewing it and, if necessary, we are also thinking to bring forward some amendments in it.

SHRIMATI KRISHNA SAHI : Is the hon. Minister aware that after theft these rare and priceless idols are being smuggled out of the country and that the quantum of such smuggling has increased over the last five years? Will the hon. Minister state the reasons for this?

SHRIMATI SUSHILA ROHATGI : Such theft and smuggling do take place. But the figures relating to the centrally protected monuments which we have with us do not show that there has been any increase in such cases over the last one year. On the contrary there has been some decline in this regard. We have the figures with us in this regard and a vigil is being kept on it, but the smuggling is going on in spite of these efforts. The public also will have to extend their cooperation in this endeavour. We are considering to raise the fine and the term of imprisonment which is six months for the present, for those who indulge in smuggling and violation of law and do not get their registration done.

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL VYAS : I want to know the number of gangs of idol thieves which are operating and the number of idols they have smuggled out of the country? What action Government are taking against them?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO) : We have some figures relating to the idols, but do not have any figures about thieves.