

Discovery of Ancient Trade Emporium

593. SHRI H.A. DORA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether an ancient trade emporium dating back to about 4000 years has been discovered recently near Kuntasi village in Malia Taluka in Gujarat;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the outcome of the study made of these Harappan era finds; and

(d) the steps being taken for their preservation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI L.P. SHAHI): (a) to (c). Recent excavations carried out jointly by the Deccan College Post-graduate Institute, Pune and the State Department of Archaeology, Gujarat at Kuntasi, Taluka Malia, about 30 km northwest of Morvi, District Rajkot, Gujarat has brought to light a double fortification wall with a watch tower and number of structures of rubble stone masonry in mud mortar. These contain storage facilities like store bins; furnaces of craftsmen and kiln for pottery. Other finds include typical Harappan painted pottery, carnelian tubular beads, lapis lazuli beads, chert weights, two gold beads, copper bangles and terracotta toy cart frames and like.

The find of stone anchors seems to indicate that the site could have been a port during the Harappan times. Further excavations may throw more light on the exact nature of the site. The excavators have tentatively dated the site to *circa* 2200 B.C. to 1700 B.C. The site was also occupied during the late Harappan times. The present exca-

vation has been limited to the western side. Detailed study of the finds is under way.

(d) For the preservation of the site, various conservation measures are being taken up such as strengthening of mud structures by chemical treatment. It is also proposed to put up a shed or a suitable cover to protect the excavated remains by the Directorate of Archaeology, Government of Gujarat besides the posting of a chowkidar at the excavated site for its safety.

SHRI H.A. DORA: Has there been any information as to the persons who erected this particular fort and with whom they traded in those days?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO). Sir, in regard to the Harappan period and also the Mohan-Jo-Daro finds, the script in which certain inscriptions are available, has not yet been deciphered. So, it is very difficult to say at the moment who did it or to give any personal particulars of those who were involved in the construction of the structures. But one thing is known, viz, that it was a very advanced civilization. What we find is that it was a maritime people who did this. All the forts and other finds very clearly indicate that 5000 years ago or may be 8000 years ago, we had a very complete civilization, complete in all respects, and they were trading with countries as far away as Egypt and other countries in other continents. That is the situation as has been brought out by experts. It is very difficult to be more specific about these things. But as the finds are coming, more and more information about them is being unearthed and we will be able to take the House into confidence and give that information in due course. That is the position.

SHRI H.A. DORA: Have these excavations now evolved got anything to do with the

Harappan civilization?

SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO: That is what has been said in the answer.

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI: In the answer the Minister has pointed out that this particular excavation and the articles found indicate that it was a late Harappan civilization. I would like to know whether similar excavations had been carried out by the Bangalore University and certain well developed urban civilization and certain articles were found which indicate that it was not later but earlier Harappan civilization. If that is so, I would like to know whether the Government would take steps to see that further excavations are carried out and the world organisations are also involved for carrying out all these excavations as in the case of Harappan and Mohanjodaro excavations.

SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO: The question pertains to one site. Now the period being about 700 or 800 or 1000 years old, naturally experts have sub-divided it into Pre-Harappan, Harappan and Post or Later Harappan. There have been certain variations according to which these classifications have been made. About this particular site the answer is specific that the excavation was done by the Archaeological Department of Gujarat plus the Deccan College, Pune. About the other sites, I would certainly give you information about who did it, what was the find, and what was the conclusion. But on this site a specific answer has been given, although about the dating it has not been finally settled. About the question of dating they say that tentatively the date of the site is between 2200 BC and 1700 BC. It could be more; it could be a little less.

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINH: The most important archaeological finds in Saurashtra are Rojhdhi, Rangpur and the off-shore finds of Dwaraka. They are all painted grey pot-

tery-ware era which is certainly late Harappan period.'

Firstly I would like to know whether this find falls under the same category or not or whether it is earlier. If it is earlier, then is it linked up with Lothal.

Secondly as the question deals with the Archaeological Survey of India, what is being done to see that Rojhdhi and Rangpur are well preserved and this new find does not go haywire the way these two other finds have gone?

SHRI L.P. SHAHI: So far as Gujarat is concerned, there are many places and many fields. In Gujarat alone 245 Harappan, and late Harappan sites are available. We are carrying out a special repair work in a phased manner and are trying to maintain all that have been discovered so far. So long as they are not excavated, they are like a deposit. It may be excavated at a later period also. All sites cannot be excavated at a time or within two or three years. So, there is no hurry, if the deposits are there safely under the ground, they can be excavated.

AN HON. MEMBER: Is it a deposit?

SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO: It is called a deposit in archaeological language.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: It is a fixed deposit!

SHRI L.P. SHAHI: In 1986-87 at 21 places a special repair work was carried out. In 1987-88 at 33 places a special repair work were to be carried out; but the report of completion has not yet arrived; when it arrives, it will be available.

Vayudoot Service for Davangere and Shlimoga

*595. SHRI V.S. KRISHNA IYER: Will