

[25 July, 2006]

RAJYA SABHA

(vi) Head of Department of S&T Department shall have powers to sanction deputation abroad/international travel to scientists working under their control.

No officer of the ASI has been designated as Scientist.

(vii) The officers of Science and Technology Department are entitled to the Flexible Complementing Scheme.

The grant of Flexible Complementing Scheme to the eligible officers of ASI is being pursued with the Ministry of Science and Technology and Ministry of Personnel.

Observance of India-China Friendship Year

96. KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are having any special plan to observe this year in a befitting way, to strengthen the age-old friendship as this year is being observed as India-China friendship year;

(b) what kind of cultural exchanges are going to take place; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A series of commemorative activities have been mutually agreed upon between the two sides, which will span over the entire year, involving high-level visits and activities related with cultural, economic, tourism, educational and defence exchanges.

Some of the main cultural exchanges related to visit of cultural delegations, classical dance troupes etc. and organization of academic seminar, exhibition etc.

(c) Does not arise.

Historical discoveries in Krishna District of Andhra Pradesh

97. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that three Buddhist Chaityas and Monastery, a three dimensional structure, broken images, pillars and pottery from the first and second century AD have been found in Krishna District of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details of the discovery by ASI;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Ghantasala village of Krishna District was first reported a historical site by Buswell of East India Company in 1870-71; and

(d) if so, what has been done by Government to excavate this area for more historical discoveries?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The scientific clearance, carried out by the Archaeological Survey of India at Yernampadu mound, Ghantasala (District Krishna, Andhra Pradesh) in February-March 2006, has exposed remains of three square brick platforms which were served to enshrine Buddhist statues, known as Buddhist *chaitya*. These platforms were referred to as three dimensional structures. In addition, fragmentary limestone pillars, architectural members and pottery of the first and second century A.D. were discovered.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The Archaeological Survey of India carried out excavations at Yernampadu mound, Ghantasala (District Krishna, Andhra Pradesh) in 1984-85. Excavations revealed three cultural phases, and among other things, remains of a Buddhist monastic complex. In 2006, the Archaeological Survey of India undertook scientific clearance work here and exposed above-mentioned structural remains and artifacts. After exposure, conservation and preservation of important archaeological remains were undertaken.

Centrally protected monuments in Andhra Pradesh

98. SHRI C.RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the Centrally protected monuments in various districts of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) the amount spent on the construction, preservation and maintenance of those monuments during each of the last three years;

(c) whether the State Government of Andhra Pradesh has requested the Ministry to include some more monuments located in various districts as Centrally protected; and