

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Monday, December 2, 1991/ Agrahayana
11, 1913 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at
Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: The camera is going to be focussed on those who are going to ask the questions and on those who are going to reply to the questions.

SHRI RAM NAIK: Sir, we should congratulate Shri Sharad Dighe for commencing the first question today.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Sharad Dighe.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Soviet Aided Power Projects

*142 SHRI SHARAD DIGHE:
SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D.
CHAVAN:

Will the Minister of POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of Soviet aided power projects pending at present;

(b) whether fate of these projects has become uncertain following the developments in the Soviet Union which have disrupted industrial production in that country; and

(c) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to complete these projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): (a) to (c). At present Indo-Soviet Cooperation in the power sector covers twelve projects which are either being executed or are to be executed with Soviet technical and financial assistance. Discussions with the Soviets have revealed that USSR stands by all its commitments to India. Consequently, on disruption in execution of energy projects in India is anticipated.

SHRI SHARAD DIGHE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has not given any details. Therefore, part a) of my question is this: which are these 12 projects which are either being executed or to be executed with the Soviet technical and financial assistance, at what stage they are? He has also said that discussions have been held with the U.S.S.R. Now, when were those discussions held, with whom have you held those discussions? Part-b) of my question is : there is a group known as Indo-Soviet Working Group on Power, that is what I read from the Annual Report of Department of Power 1990-91. Now, the 13th meeting of that Indo-Soviet Working Group on Power was held in Moscow from 18-25 September, 1990 and all these projects were reviewed. I would like to know whether there was any meeting thereafter for reviewing of these projects and what had transpired in those meetings?

SHRI KALP NATH RAI: Mr.

Sir, as the hon. Member has asked, these are the 12 projects:

1. Vindhyachal Super Thermal Power Project;
2. Vindhyachal Stage-I Transmission Line;
3. Kahalgaon Super Thermal Power Project;
4. Tehri Hydro Power Complex;
5. Vindhyachal Super Thermal Power Project;
6. Vindhyachal Stage-II Transmission Line;
7. Maithon Thermal Power Project;
8. Kayamkulam Thermal Power Project;
9. Mangalore Thermal Power Project;
10. Kol Dam Hydro Electric Project;
11. Bakreshwar Thermal Power Project; and
12. Dulhasti-Kishanpur-Srinagar Transmission Line.

Sir, the External Affairs Minister, Shri Madhavsinh Solanki had gone to USSR recently. He had discussions with the President, Mr. Gorbachov and Mr. Boris Yeltsin. They have made commitment that whatever the projects are signed with India, Russia stands by its commitment and they will fulfil it.

SHRI SHARAD DIGHE: Now, Sir, the Minister has said generally that there has been an assurance by Mr. Gorbachov and

Mr. Boris Yeltsin. I would like to put a pointed question that why the Soviet Union has not renewed its five-year protocol guiding the rupee-rouble trade since last year when massive loans worth over Rs.6,000 crores for various projects to be implemented during the Eighth Plan are involved. For example, compared to other bilateral assistance, Soviet assistance for the power sector was on soft conditions at the rate of 2.5 percent. The Soviet Union committed a loan of 219 million roubles to the 840 MW Kahalgaon Thermal Project. Similarly, Soviets have also committed nearly 360 million roubles for the 1,260 MW Vindhyachal-I Project. There is another massive loan worth Rs. 1,426 crore...*(Interruptions)*.

MR. SPEAKER: You should not give the information, you should ask the question.

SHRI SHARAD DIGHE: So, such high loans are involved, as far as power sector is concerned and elsewhere also, and these are soft loans at 2.5 per cent. So, as the protocol of the rupee-rouble trade has not since been renewed and since in various meetings the government authorities and the Soviet officials have indicated the possibility of changing over to hard currency, have they said anything about this and what will be the effect of this as far as the rupee-rouble trade is concerned, if hard currency is insisted.

SHRI KALP NATH RAI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Foreign Minister and the Soviet President and all others concerned had a discussion from 16th November to 20th November and in that discussion they made the commitment and they also requested the Foreign Minister that Indian delegation should come to Moscow and sign the protocol. Whatever formalities are to be fulfilled, those will be fulfilled when the Indian delegation goes to Moscow.

SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in spite of the optimism by the hon. Power Minister, we all know that the Soviet Union is going through a deep finan-

cial crisis and there is a tremendous amount of hard currency problem. The Soviet Union has definitely indicated that they will not continue these projects on rupee terms and the whole rupee-roubie protocol is under review. Now, there are about Rs. 10,000 crores worth of loans on soft terms involved and they involve a capacity of something like 5,900 MW. Does the Government of India have a contingent plan or an alternative plan if the Soviet Union refuses to continue the rupee trade and honour soft term conditions?

SHRI KALP NATH RAI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, whatever information I have got with me, I can give it to the hon. Member. The Ambassador of Russia has just met me and I asked him particularly as to what is the commitment of his country. He told me that his Government is committed to fulfil the commitment made by them to India.

SHRI HARI KISHORE SINGH: There is no Russian Ambassador here; there is the Ambassador of the Soviet Union.

MR. SPEAKER: This is disallowed. You need not reply to his question. Yes, Mr. Hari Kishore Singh. You have the opportunity now. I am allowing you to put a supplementary now.

[*Translation*]

SHRI HARI KISHORE SINGH: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wanted to say that the Soviet Ambassador to India is there.....

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: No, that is out of question. You come to the point please.

[*Translation*]

SHRI HARI KISHORE SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my question is whether the hon. Minister is aware of the fact that the Soviet Union is financial position has deteriorated to such an extent that it is not even in a position to give this month's salary to its

employees. If the hon. Minister is aware of the developments taking place in that country, which is being widely covered by the media, then it is necessary that he holds talks about these projects, with the various republics of the Soviet Union. Has he taken up this matter with them? If so, when did he do it and what has been the outcome of the talks with them? I have gone through the newspapers, when our Minister of External Affairs paid a visit to that country. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am raising this matter here, because many projects in my State of Bihar....

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: This is disallowed. This is out of the question. Mr. Minister, you need not reply.

[*Translation*]

Have you taken up this matter with the various republics?

SHRI KALP NATH RAI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I cannot comment on the news reports that the hon. Member has come across, through newspapers and radio, but I can certainly part with the information that I have with me about the talks held between India and Russia. Here, I would like to say only this much that:

Hum Kare kya, dariya agar labrez maikhana mein hai

Hum tho utni jaante hain, Jitni paimane mein hai.

[*English*]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am sure the hon. Minister appreciates the great importance of our power projects being implemented according to the schedule, because the future of this country is involved so far as the industrial production and agricultural production are concerned. So far as the Bakreshwar project - one of the twelve projects - is concerned, the agreement with U.S.S.R. was entered into in

February, 1990. They were to supply three turbines on turn-key basis. They were to prepare the detailed project report and give it to us. Since March, 1991 there is no communication whatsoever in spite of repeated approaches being made by the Government of West Bengal - and I understand by the Government of India also - for the last nine months. The agency which was implementing this project in Soviet Russia, namely T.P.E. - which is the power organisation there - seems to have been dissolved because no reply is being given. The two officers who are there, seem to have vanished, or at least they are not in the position any longer. Therefore, is the hon. Minister aware of this development and is the hon. Minister taking any steps to find out - unit-wise - as to what is the position and particularly what is the position with regard to Bakreshwar? The second part of my question is that will the hon. Minister give the Government's reaction to the request of the Government of West Bengal to delink this project from Soviet assistance because none is available now and to include it in the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (O.E.C.F.) of Japan for which the request has been made in July, 1991? I would like to know the Government's response to that.

SHRI KALP NATH RAI: All the projects except Bakreshwar thermal power project are in the Central Sector and are being executed by Central Sector power corporations. Bakreshwar project is being executed by the West Bengal Power Development Corporation and is in the State sector. Shri Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of West Bengal has written a letter to the Government of India that this project of Bakreshwar should not be tied up with Russia and this should now be tied up with the Japanese Q.E.C.F. That letter is under consideration ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Three letters were written. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI KALP NATH RAI: We have received that letter and it is under consideration of the Government of India. We are

thinking to change the funding resource as requested by Shri Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Very good.

[*Translation*]

Setting up of Jharkhand State

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*143 **SHRI SIMON MARANDI:**
SHRI GOVINDA CHANDRA
MUNDA:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any demand to set up Jharkhand State by including the tribal areas of Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal for the speedy development of the tribal areas and speedy implementation of several projects of these areas;

(b) if so, the details of the action taken thereon;

(c) the difficulties, if any, in this regard; and

(d) the time by which the Jharkhand State is likely to be set up?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI RAMLAL RAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d). The Central Government had set up a Committee for Jharkhand Matters in August, 1989. The Committee's report was received in May, 1990. However, the Committee could not reach unanimity. Thereafter, a Review Committee was set up in November, 1990 but this Committee also could not make much progress in its deliberations. The matter is under consideration of the Government.

[*Translation*]

SHRI SIMON MARANDI: Mr. Speaker,