

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Friday, July 12, 1996/Asadha 21, 1918 (Saka)

(The Lok Sabha met at
Eleven of the Clock)

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Length of National Highways in the Country

*41. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA
DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIA

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) the length of National Highways constructed in the country and the expenditure incurred thereon during the last three years;

(b) whether the National Highways in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Bihar are far low as compared to the other States;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor, and

(d) the details of steps taken to construct more National Highways in these States?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) During the last three years, a length of only 240 kms. has been added to the National Highway network by declaring State Highways as National Highways, in January, 1996. As the road was an existing State Highway no expenditure has been incurred since its declaration as National Highways

(b) No, Sir

(c) and (d) Do not arise

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR : Sir, I am drawing the attention of the Chair to the answer. Please read the Question and the answer

MR. SPEAKER : It is the right of the Member who has asked the Question

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR : Mr. Speaker Sir. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : This will not go on record.

[Translation]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA : Mr. Speaker. Sir, I am totally unsatisfied with the reply of the hon. Minister. The total length of National Highways in Rajasthan is more than other states. The Rajasthan

* Not Recorded.

Government is allocated half the amount requested by it for their maintenance, whereas more money is allocated to smaller states. In 1994-95, the State Government had sought Rs. 47.26 crores. Against this you gave only Rs. 22 crores. With this amount, we cannot maintain the National Highways, and not a single paise can be spent on ten new projects which have been approved by the Indian Government. I want to know from the hon. Minister, whether the total length of National Highway, passing through Rajasthan is higher as compared to other States? My second question is, whether it is a fact that the allocated amount includes the cost of construction of four lane Jaipur-Delhi Highway?

SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN : Sir, the learned Member has asked about the length and all that. In Rajasthan, the length is 2931 kilometers; in Madhya Pradesh, it is 2946 kilometers; in Tamil Nadu, it is 1896 kilometers; and in Bihar, it is 2237 kilometers. Therefore, there is no question of comparison among the States. With regard to the non-workability of the programmes sanctioned, the Finance Department has given a very low budget and, therefore, we could not work them out.

[Translation]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA : Mr. Speaker. Sir, the hon. Minister has not given a reply to my question. I am asking about Rajasthan of the total amount sought by the Rajasthan Government for the maintenance of the National Highways, not even half is given by the Centre. While travelling from Delhi to Jaipur, as soon as one enters Rajasthan, the vehicles start making noise. This gives a bad name to the Rajasthan Government. Hence, my request is that the amount sought by the Rajasthan Government, should be given in toto by the Centre. This is not being done. Therefore, you should reprimand them. However, I am going to praise you in my State. Mr. Speaker, Sir, help me.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Do you have specific information about Rajasthan?

SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN : It is not a question of our spending. The Government require some amount. The Finance Department is awarding some amount. Whatever amount is acceded to by the Finance Department only we are expending. Therefore, we will ask for some more funds as the learned Member says.

[Translation]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA : Mr. Speaker. Sir, my second question is whether the Rajasthan Government has sent a proposal to the Centre for declaring five routes in the state as National Highways? The time by which it is likely to be

approved. Another thing is that buses and trucks involved in accidents, are seen overturned on the National Highways. We have been hearing for the last so many years that after every twenty Kilometres a traffic police post, an ambulance and a crane for towing away the vehicles involved in accidents would be provided to prevent traffic congestion. What arrangements are you going to make regarding this? Along with this telephone facility like PCO should also be provided. This is a good suggestion. If you accept this suggestion, then this short term Government would be praised sky high. Else, the Government would go, you would not be able to do this and I will also keep on cursing you.

[English]

SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN : Sir, the hon. Member may put a separate question. He is putting questions on a different plane I want a separate question to be put in this regard...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is no reply. Hon. Minister, mine was a good question regarding policy matter...(Interruptions) No sums are being allocated to us whereas small states are being given funds.

DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Centre is not bothered about roads. And the Centre give absolutely no attention on their maintenance. Due to this, each year Rs. 900 crore is spent on the roads, including their maintenance. This has to be borne by the country. This burden is reflected in the form of price rise. You are yet to construct any new road. You have said that an announcement was made regarding construction of 240 Km of roads. But no new road construction work was taken up. The State Governments have to look after the road maintenance. And when they seek funds, you do not give. Under such circumstances, if the Centre do not provide funds for the maintenance of roads, then this problem will not be solved. Therefore, Sir, I want to know through you, whether Government have given Rs. 30 crore, as sought by the Madhya Pradesh Government for maintenance of roads? If not, then what will happen to the roads? Have you formulated any comprehensive policy in this regard?

[English]

SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN : Sir, as a comprehensive answer to the questions raised by my friend I think I can enlighten him by the answers I am going to give him

Keeping in view the crying need for the development of the National Highways in the country, the overall deficiencies including the funds needed for augmenting the infrastructural facilities, the

immediate requirement for National Highways has worked out to or amounted to Rs. 7,730 crore. But the Planning Commission has drastically pruned down the requirement and a meagre amount of Rs. 2,260 crore was allotted, and enhanced to Rs. 3,100 crore only to take care of the inflation in the meantime - and was earmarked for the development of the National Highways. The allocation made by the Planning Commission is hardly sufficient to take care of the requirement of the ongoing works on the existing National Highways.

Now I will read out the allotment per year. In 1992-93 funds to the tune of Rs. 677 crore were demanded but only Rs. 433 crore was the allocation. In 1993-94 Rs. 655 crore was demanded but Rs. 565 crore was the allocation, in 1994-95 Rs. 1120 crore was the demand and Rs. 633 crore was allocated and in 1995-96 Rs. 1358 crore was demanded but only Rs. 1138 crore was allotted...(Interruptions)

DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIA : How are we concerned about it?

SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN : Please hear me...(Interruptions) We have been asking for the necessary amount. But the allotment is meagre. I cannot help it...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please listen to the Minister

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please listen to him. You want an answer and you are not allowing him to answer. What is this?

SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN : Sir, I have already read out the year-wise details because we require certain amount but the amount allotted is only meagre. I will ask for more amount. That is all I can do

MR. SPEAKER : He is going to ask for more funds. What can the Minister do? The Minister of Finance is smiling approvingly.

(Interruptions)

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Sir, as we all know, Andhra Pradesh is one of the largest States in the country which is dreaming to achieve more prosperity through industrialisation, and for achieving industrial progress we need the best road system. But, unfortunately, the road position is very bad. In fact, in 1992, our State Government had sent a proposal for taking up 4,800 kilometres of National Highways, but till now only 3,062 kms. have been approved...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR : Sir, the Member concerned is asking a Supplementary question in relation to Andhra Pradesh. The name of Andhra Pradesh does not appear in the main question. So,

he should not be allowed to ask a Supplementary in relation to Andhra Pradesh State.

[Translation]

SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, nothing has been given to Bihar for the last several year.

[English]

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Sir, I want to know about State Highways converted into National Highways on the basis of the yardsticks specified on the basis of the size of the State. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : The question relates specifically to Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Bihar. If the hon. Minister has the information, I have no objection.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : The question is not on Andhra Pradesh

(Interruptions)

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR : The first question relates to the length of National Highways in the country. So, it is relating to the country.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Sir, the question relates to the length of National Highways in the country. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : If the hon. Minister has the information, I have no objection.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : There should be order in the House.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI NAVIN CHANDRA MEHTA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, look here also.

MR. SPEAKER : I will definitely look

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I will come to you. Why are you in a hurry like this? You are wasting the time of the House. If you want to ask Supplementaries, you keep quiet. I will not allow anybody standing like this. The criterion of allowing Supplementaries is to raise hands and I notice it. If you stand up, you will not get it.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Sir, I would request the hon. Minister of Finance to give top priority in allocating funds for constructing National Highways all over the country. If we want to remove poverty, then we have to achieve massive industrialisation. Unless we have the best transport system through

express roads, we cannot dream this achievement. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : What is your question? You are only suggesting.

(Interruptions)

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Sir, I understand that the hon. Minister is not getting sufficient funds from the Finance Ministry to give the matching grants even for getting loans from A.D.B. and also World Bank. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : If you understand, then why have you to ask questions? Please ask a question now.

(Interruptions)

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what steps he is taking. The hon. Minister is saying that money is not available. We have got a very dynamic Finance Minister who can always manage to give the matching funds for the construction of the National Highways in the country. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You have asked your question. Enough is enough.

(Interruptions)

SHRI T. G. VENKATRAMAN : The question does not pertain to Andhra Pradesh.

MR. SPEAKER : If you have information, you can provide him. Otherwise you can give him the information later on.

SHRI T. G. VENKATRAMAN : As the main question relates to only three States, I have gathered answer only for that. I want a notice for this question.

MR. SPEAKER : Please supply him the answer.

SHRI T. G. VENKATRAMAN : Yes, Sir.

[Translation]

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, nothing has been said in reply to the question which also referred to Bihar. Bihar is the most backward state and the roads have not been repaired by making special allocation for their maintenance. Bihar has been ignored. As far as part (a) of my question is concerned, I want to say that hon. Minister should reply as to whether Bihar has recommended 5-7 roads for giving the status of National Highway during the last Five Year Plan, and Patna, Muzaffarpur, Sonvarsha and Bhitamore roads as the third number. Whether you are to take immediate decision on these proposals and whether those roads will be declared as National Highway? With regard to part (b) of my question I want to know as to whether you want to get all the National Highways of Bihar reconstructed by making additional allocation. I want your directive in regard to Bihar.

being ignored. Hon. Minister should admit that Bihar is being neglected.

[English]

SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN : Sir, there is no question of neglect by the Government. Bihar has got 2,237 kilometres of National Highways ... (Interruptions) The funds for development of National Highways have progressively reduced from 1.6 per cent of the total in the First Plan to 0.6 per cent in the Eighth Plan. Therefore, every year it is being reduced. In the circumstances, there is financial crisis. I will plead for Bihar also.

[Translation]

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Bihar Government has sent some proposals for roads to the Central Government. No reply has been sent by hon. Minister in this regard. I want your protection. Hon. Minister should spell out as to whether new Highways are going to be constructed.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : The Minister will look into it.

SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN : Yes Sir.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Sir, the basic problem with the National Highways is the resource crunch. The demand from different States is high and the money supplied to the Ministry of Surface Transport is too low. I would like to remind one sentence of John. F. Kennedy and then I will ask a very brief question. Once he said : 'America has good roads not because it is rich; it is rich because it has good roads'.

This is the most neglected Ministry I would like to draw your attention to a unanimous Resolution passed by this Parliament on May 13, 1988. On May 13, 1988 our Parliament passed a unanimous Resolution earmarking a cess on sale of petrol and diesel at five per cent to the Central Road Fund. In the last six years we have seen five Governments and none of these Governments honoured this Resolution. (Interruptions)

SHRI P.M. SAYEED : That includes yours also.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Mine was only for 13 days... (Interruptions)

SHRI P.M. SAYEED : You took decisions in lunch time. (Interruptions)

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : We took one decision in lunch time and you always remind me every day.

[Translation]

I did it empty stomach whereas you have done it with your belly full.

[English]

Sir, it is the contempt of the Indian Parliament that this Lok Sabha has passed a unanimous

Resolution eight years back asking five per cent on the sale of petrol and diesel to the Surface Transport Ministry and it is not given. Unless we give this amount, all States may quarrel here; but no Government or no Minister will be able to give even 500 kilometres per year as National Highway.

So, I am requesting the Finance Minister and the entire Government. He cannot say : 'I am Surface Transport Minister and I have nothing to do with the Finance Minister'.

SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN : I am pleading with them.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Sir, as a Government I am asking them to know as to when are they going to implement this Resolution of Parliament giving adequate funds to the Central Road Fund ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please listen. This is a very very important question.

SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN : Sir, I quite agree with the suggestion made by my learned friend on the other side. I have also been pleading for that, but I am not getting a positive answer. I will make the Finance Minister agree to that. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please listen to me.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Sir, this is a very important Resolution passed by Parliament. If such is the reply, then, all the questions raised would become irrelevant. You only say that you cannot help it, but somebody has to help out the situation.

MR. SPEAKER : I think, Mr. Pramod Mahajan has raised a very very important issue. I also remember the passing of this Resolution unanimously on the floor of this House which has been referred to by the hon. Member. I would also like to know what has happened to that Resolution. The Government should come out stating why action could not be taken on it. What are they going to do with the Resolution? Then, I will allow half-an-hour discussion on this question because it is very important.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : You have to ask all the former Finance Ministers to get the answer.

Revival of Sick PSUs

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*42 SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA
SHRI SOUMYA RANJAN

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state

(a) the details of the sick Public Sector Undertakings declared sick as on date, location-wise,

(b) whether the Government have started the process for revival of these units;