

- (14) 67th Report (10th Lok Sabha) on Uneconomic purchase of engines for Shaktiman vehicles.

12.03½ hrs.

COMMITTEE ON SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION

First and Second Report

[Translation]

SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA (Outer-Delhi) : Sir, I beg to present the first and second reports (Hindi and English versions) of the Committee on Subordinate Legislation.

12.04 hrs.

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

Signing of Ganga Water Treaty with Bangladesh

[English]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA): Hon. Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to make a statement with regard to the sharing of Ganga waters between Bangladesh and our country.

Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh paid an official visit to India from December 10 to 12, 1996 at my invitation. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had meetings with our President, Vice-President, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, Leader to the Opposition in Parliament. She held detailed talks with me. She also met leaders of political parties. These talks were held in a most warm and friendly atmosphere. The Bangladesh Prime Minister also paid a visit to Ajmer and Jaipur during her stay in India.

This was the first visit of the Bangladesh Prime Minister to India since she assumed office in June this year. The visit however comes as the culmination of series of exchanges initiated shortly after our Government took office. Earlier the External Affairs Minister had visited Dhaka in September, and we had received the Bangladesh Foreign Minister in November. This period of intense interaction has placed our relations on an entirely new footing. Progress is being made on all issues in our bilateral relations. The prominent issue in our bilateral ties, over the last two decades has been the issue of sharing of Ganga waters at Farakka. I am honoured to state that I and the Bangladesh Prime Minister have today signed a new Treaty on the sharing of the Ganga waters. We are

confident this Treaty would be a landmark in our bilateral relations. The Treaty protects the interests of India and at the same time helps Bangladesh by providing a share of the Ganga waters to that country.

[Translation]

KUMARI UMA BHARATI (Khajuraho) : More water has been given... (Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA : I shall lay a copy of the text of the Treaty with its Annexures on the Table of the House. According to the Treaty, the sharing of Ganga waters at Farakka between India and Bangladesh will be on the basis of a formula which is at Annexure I. The key merit of this formula is that it shares available waters on a basis which is fair and equitable. The formula also takes into account the basic requirements and minimum needs of both sides. Therefore, during the critical period within the lean season *i.e.*, from March 1 to May 10, India and Bangladesh each shall receive a guaranteed flow of 35,000 cusecs of water in an alternating sequence of three 10-day periods each. This is aimed at meeting the fundamental requirements of both our countries through a just and reasonable sharing of the burden of shortage. The Treaty also has the merit of being a long term arrangement combined with scope for reviews at shorter intervals to study the impact of the sharing formula and to make needed adjustments. While the Treaty will be valid for 30 years and renewable on mutual consent, there is a provision of mandatory reviews at the end of 5 years and even earlier after two years with provisions for adjustments as required. Pending a fresh understanding after the review stage, Bangladesh would continue to receive 90 per cent of its share in accordance with the new formula. We would thus avoid a situation where there is no agreement on the sharing of the Ganga waters between India and Bangladesh.

The signing of the Treaty between India and Bangladesh is a fitting tribute to the special quality of our relations. Indo-Bangladesh cooperation is based on a history of shared sacrifices, sanctified with the blood of the martyrs who laid down their lives in 1971. It is entirely appropriate that this Treaty comes on the eve of the 25th anniversary of the liberation of Bangladesh which was a momentous landmark in the history of our continent. With the signing of this Treaty, we expect to usher in a new era in Indo-Bangladesh relations. This new relationship should be of immense benefit to India in the long term in all areas of bilateral relations including security, trade and other areas. With the removal of what has been a constant irritant in bilateral ties, we can look forward to an entirely new phase of cooperation. As the House would recall, we have already taken initiatives in the commercial sphere by extending tariff concessions to Bangladesh on a range of products of export interest to them. We propose