

**Title:** Request the government to allocate Rs.244 crore to the Calcutta Port Trust for dredging of the shipping channel.

SHRI LAKSHMAN SETH (TAMLUK): Sir, the Calcutta Port and the Haldia Port are lifeline of the economy of West Bengal. But, now, Calcutta Port and Haldia Port are facing an alarming situation because they had already spent about Rs. 477 crore for dredging of the shipping channel. The Government has only given Rs. 233 crore. Rest of the amount of the Reserve Fund has not been given by the Ministry.

1236 hours (Mr. Deputy-Speaker *in the Chair*)

As per the decision of the Cabinet in the year 1994, it is the duty of the Government of India to dredge the shipping channel, which is the national waterway of our country. If the fund is not given, then the dredging work will be stopped. The Calcutta Port Trust has spent Rs. 477 crore of the Reserve Fund for the dredging purposes. The rest of the amount, namely, Rs. 244 crore is not given by the Ministry of Surface Transport and the Ministry of Finance. The employees of the Calcutta Port Trust will not get the salary and also the development works will be stopped. The Port is a very important infrastructure for the development of the industry.

This year the Calcutta Port including Haldia Port, as a whole, achieved the fourth position among the eleven major ports in respect of handling traffic, in spite of so many hurdles and in spite of being riverine port. Also, at the time of signing an accord on sharing of Ganga water between Indian and Bangladesh, the Government promised to provide adequate funds for dredging the shipping channel.

So, I request the hon. Prime Minister, hon. Minister of Finance and hon. Minister of Surface Transport to allocate the rest of the amount, namely, Rs. 244 crore to the Calcutta Port Trust immediately, which is outstanding during the period 1999-2000. This is my humble submission.