

12.15 hrs,

STATEMENT RE : AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR THE HBJ GAS PIPELINE

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR SINGH) : The Hon'ble Members of this House may recall the debate held on 12th March, on the Calling Attention Notice relating to the HBJ gas pipeline project. Some Members had expressed concern at the delay likely in the implementation of the project as a result of the delay on the part of the Government in taking a decision on the award of contract; some Members had referred to the possible cost escalation as a result of this delay. Observations were made by a few Members stressing the need for maximising indigenous participation in the project. The House will also recall that I had observed in the course of my reply that though there had been a delay of about two to three months in concluding the contract, this would be to our advantage by way of possible reduction in the project cost, and that we will still be able to maintain the implementation schedule to meet the requirements of the fertilizer and power plants. I had also observed that the final decision will be taken by the Government in the larger national interests.

2. I am very happy to inform this Hon'ble House that the final decision has since been taken by the Government on the award. Based on final evaluation of the four revised bids received on 3.4.1986, it has been decided to issue Letter of Intent for the work of execution of the HBJ pipeline to the consortium led by M/s SPIE CAPAG of France, whose bids has emerged as the lowest in the overall analysis.

3. As a result of the decision to invite fresh bids, we have been able to effect saving by way of reduction in outgo of our valuable foreign exchange resources. At current exchange rates there will be a saving of over Rs. 100 crores for the project. We have also received more attractive credit packages. Adequate indigenous content in the project is being ensured by way of participation of many private and public sector undertakings

such as Telecommunications Consultants of India Limited, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited, Larsen & Toubro, and Punj Sons, to name a few. We will be able to ensure maximisation of indigenous participations in the project, which will help us build up our own expertise for execution of such projects in future. For specific general engineering items and civil engineering and erection, Indian sub-contractors from both public and private sectors will be utilised. Thus, we have been able to satisfy ourselves and I am sure all the Hon'ble Members will be in agreement with me that the contractor whom we have selected for the execution of this first major highpressure, cross-country gas pipeline project in our country is the best in all respects.

4. Work is scheduled to commence shortly, and as I had assured the House earlier it will be our endeavour to ensure that the pace of project implementation is maintained without let-up, the original time schedule is adhered to, and the gas requirements of user industries are met in accordance with their schedule.

5. In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the decision we have taken now is in the interest of the project, and I am sure that this august House will unanimously share my view that it is in our larger national interests.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

[Translation]

- (i) Need to adopt effective measures for immediate installation of bio-gas plants in Bastar District of Madhya Pradesh

SHRI MANKURAM SODI (Bastar) : The scheme of installation of Bio-gas plants in Madhya Pradesh being run by the Khadi and Gramodyog Commission has failed totally as the officers of the department are not implementing the scheme properly. If these officers work with devotion, there is no doubt that this scheme will become very popular among the villagers. But it is

generally seen that the work is left incomplete. If work for bio-gas pit is completed, the work of laying pipe-line remains incomplete and if pipe-line is laid, the drum is not installed. At places the work is incomplete for the last three years. The farmers are distressed at the indifferent attitude of the officers and now have started opposing this useful scheme. Millions of Quintals of Firewood could have been saved and the pressure on the forest reduced had the target of bio-gas plants been achieved every year. But now merely due to the carelessness of the departmental officers, this popular scheme is being disliked by the people.

From 1982 to 85, 19 such plants were to be set up in Kounda village block of Bastar district but till now only one plant has been completed. Similary in 32 blocks of the district, hundreds of such plants are lying incomplete. I, therefore, request the Central Government to issue immediate directives to the Commission to complete the work immediately and punish the guilty officers for delaying the work.

[English]

- (ii) Need to open an institute in every backward district of the country to train nurses, compounders, drivers, etc.

SHRI I. RAMA RAI (Kasaragod) : The 7th Five year Plan has given so much importance for the upliftment of the poor especially the down-trodden like Harijans and Girijans. The economic backwardness can be removed by providing jobs for at least one member from every poor family in the prosperous foreign countries, which will earn the badly needed foreign exchange also. For this I suggest to provide an institute in every backward district, similar to the proposed Central School, to train nurses, compounders, drivers and mechanics. After the training, these youngsters of the unfortunate families should be helped to get jobs by the various Embassies of our country abroad. As a first measure, I suggest that one such residential institute may be set up at Kasaragod, a most backward district of Kerala.

- (iii) Need to drop the proposal of merging Bharat Baigan Company, Muzaffarpur, Bihar with a sick industrial unit of West Bengal.

SHRI R. S. KHIRHAR (Sitamarhi) :
Sir, With the Industries Ministry at the Centre

there is a proposal to merge Bharat Baigan Company (Muzaffarpur-Bihar) with the sick industrial units of Bengal, which will be injustice with the said Bharat Baigan Company and with the workers engaged therein, because, Bharat Baigan Company always runs in profit and its future is bright. This year also the Bharat Baigan Company has earned profit of Rs. 20 lakhs. There was never any hartal or *bundh* in Bharat Baigan Company and the workers engaged in this company are well satisfied. So, Bharat Baigan Company (Muzaffarpur-Bihar) should not be taken and tagged with any other Industrial unit and it may kindly be left alone.

- (iv) Need to bring the entire Malabar area of Kerala under T.V. coverage.

SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN (Cannanore) : Doordarshan today plays a vital role in the day to day affairs of our country, being a live audio-visual link between the people and the Government. Its main objective is, we know, to inform, to educate and to entertain.

The policy of the Government of India appears to be to reach TV facilities to every nook and corner of the country. But unfortunately, while spacing TV transmitters, several important and densely populated areas in the Malabar Districts of Kerala have been overlooked. Malabar area consists of six major districts with nearly half the populations of the State. It is amazing that in spite of this, the Malabar area does not have a single high power transmitter. Not only are the districts of Wynad, Kasaragod and Malappuram ignored but also several areas, among them towns and villages lying between Calicut and Cannanore are beyond the areas covered by the respective low power transmitters.

The existence of low power transmitters at Calicut and Cannanore make it impossible for the people in the areas lying between to hope for TV coverage unless the Government deems it fit to either increase the capacity of the existing transmitters or to instal a transmitter midway, say at Mahe, which lies in the Union Territory of Pondicherry or at Badagara—both of which lie between Calicut and Cannanore. It is, therefore, essential for the development of these areas that the