

[Translation]

SHRI DAL CHANDER JAIN : I beg to move that leave be granted to introduce a Bill to provide for proper labelling of all packed articles meant for human consumption.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is :

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to provide for proper labelling of all packed articles meant for human consumption."

The motion was adopted.

[Translation]

SHRI DAL CHANDER JAIN : I introduce the Bill.

HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION

[English]

Cleaning of Ganga Water

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, we will take up Half-an-Hour Discussion. Today, we confine Half-an-Hour Discussion to half-an-hour only. I request the Hon. Members to be precise.

SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV (Varanasi) : You cannot break the convention.

[Translation]

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am very thankful to you and also the Hon. Speaker to allow me to raise this half-an-hour discussion on this important question. This question was tabled for 18th of this month but unfortunately it could not be covered in the Questions for oral answers on that date. Therefore, it has become necessary to have discussion on this subject.

The Ganges is regarded a sacred river for crores of people of our country. A large number of pilgrims come daily from far flung areas to take a dip in the holy water of the river. It is believed that the Ganges absolves

us of our sins. As the mother tolerates the mischiefs of her children so the Ganges also absolves sinful devouts of their sins. It is a matter of concern that the Ganges has been polluted in its 2525 kilometres long journey from Gangotri.

Sir, the Ganges needs no mention of its importance. About one third of our population depends on the Ganga for their living. 37 per cent population of the country lives along the banks of this river. About 47 per cent of the total irrigated area in the country falls in the Ganga Valley. In this valley there are 48 big canal projects. A number of large dams have been constructed across it. A number of tributaries flow into the Ganga on the way like, the Ramganga falls into it at Kannauj, the Yamuna and the invisible Saraswati rivers at Allahabad. Beyond this place other tributaries like the tons, the Sone, the Gomti, Ghaghra, Gandak, Burhi Gandak and Kosi join the Ganga before it flows into the sea after touching Bhagirath and Hubli. No scheme has been formulated to check pollution of these tributaries. So I would like to know from the Hon. Minister what scheme has been formulated to check pollution in these tributaries because if effluents from these tributaries continue to flow into the Ganges, the pollution in the Ganges will go on increasing no matter how much we clean it.

Sir, during summer, there remains very little water in the Ganges when it flows through the plains of Uttar Pradesh. In Bihar, the water level increases as 60 per cent water flows into it from the tributaries, 20 per cent from Ghaghra and 16 per cent from Yamuna. The Ganga Valley supply water for the use of the people of 4 States. It serves as a drainage for Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi. Therefore, it is very necessary that scheme for cleaning all the rivers passing through this region should be formulated so that the Ganga goes on getting adequate water. What scheme has be formulated to ensure a constant flow of water in the Ganga throughout the year ? To what extent the Ganga may be cleaned, unless there is adequate water in it, things are not going to improve because water itself has a characteristic of cleaning itself. In its absence that characteristic will remain no more and the

[Shri Shyam Lal Yadav]

Ganga will be reduced to merely a source of sewage disposal. I would, therefore, like to know from the Hon. Minister as to what scheme has been prepared to see that there remains a minimum continuous flow in the Ganga protected from the industrial as well as residential pollution?

In addition, I may submit that a scheme regarding water transport is going to be enforced. In fact, upto Varanasi shipping has already been started which ultimately will be available between Hubli and Allahabad. For this heavy machines have started coming. I want to know as to what arrangements have been made to protect Ganga waters from pollution which will be caused due to mixing of diesel with water as a result of shipping etc.?

Sir, the Ganga is a river of faith, that is what Pandit Jawahar Lal had said. I, therefore, feel that if we keep this in mind our task will become easier. The story of the Ganga, from its emergence to its merging in the ocean is the saga of India's culture and civilisation from ancient times to modern times. The Ganga does not belong to Hindus only. Emperor Akbar too liked to drink its water and his successors, Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb also kept this tradition alive. When we talk of mass awareness in regard to operation 'Ganga Cleaning', we should know that it will not be sufficient to bring to light its religious and cultural aspects only. I am of the view that its economic, geographical and political importance too should be stressed. In our country, if something is linked with religion, it impresses more. That is why the people think about it and take interest in the scheme of cleaning the Ganga. It is correct also. Therefore, alongwith mass awareness, what is needed is that its economic and political aspects should be highlighted.

Out of the country's 2300 cities, 692 cities are in the Ganga Valley out of which 27 cities having more than 1 lakh of population are situated on the banks of the river. Calcutta is a metropolitan city, one of the very big cities in the world. It is a sort of challenge to us as to whether we will let that river, which has given life to many

of the cities be reduced to just a drainage system for the cities. We have to think over it. The scientists have researched as to how much Ganga water has become polluted. Dr. Brahm Dutt Tripathi of Banaras Hindu University has been on this job for quite a long time and he is the first man who has drawn attention to the Ganga water pollution. Research on this subject is going on in Banaras University but cooperation of other scientists should also be sought in this project.

3/4th of the total rain falls in 4 months during June to September in the Ganga Valley. For the remaining 8 months the valley remains dry. Therefore, the Ganga waters are being used for irrigation on a large scale. During the shortage period, more than 90 per cent of the Ganga waters is utilised for irrigation etc. At present, drinking water for Delhi also is coming from the Ganga. In this way, the water from the Ganga is getting lessened. In this connection I want to submit that the Government of India should see that during summer upto some minimum level water in the Ganga is maintained. Under the agreement that is going to be finalised with Bangla Desh, the Government will maintain a certain flow in Farakka but I want to know as to what level of water the Government will maintain upward Farakka during summer and lean months which fall after the rains and whether in future also there will be the people will go on enjoying the same relaxation of taking as much water as one wishes. Between Hardwar and Allahabad the River is reduced to just a thin line. Therefore, in such a situation mere controlling of water pollution is not sufficient, it is also necessary that steps should be taken to conserve water also. The Water Commission should consider and survey the situation and should find out as to how a minimum level of water can be maintained in the river.

Alongwith checking the Ganga water pollution, we have to prevent siltation also. The fertile soil flows down from the hills to the Ganga River. It is estimated that 3 tonnes of soil comes to every square km. area in the Ganga catchment area. That is why Shrimati Indira Gandhi had paid attention towards it and had asked in 1980 to make a study of the basic reasons of the

Ganga pollution and to prepare a programme to prevent such a pollution. In 1984, a detailed study was made in this connection. It was stated that due to lack of afforestation and continuous felling of trees, pollution was increasing. To prevent this, what special project is being implemented to plant trees in the Ganga catchment area? I want to know whether any arrangements have been made to clean the polluted water falling into the Ganga from 88 per cent of the 87 first class cities. This is not being done and this is causing the maximum pollution. Cleaning of the Ganga is a big task. It is not an easy one. Bhagiratha had brought it on earth from Lord Shankar's head for the salvation of his 7 thousand relatives. Today, the Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi has taken upon himself this Herculean task of cleaning the Ganga. In Kanpur, 269 million litres of waste per day pollutes its water. Besides 105 million litres of dirty water from Varanasi, 164 million litres from Patna and 30 million litres from Kanpur leather factories falls into the Ganga everyday. In order to stop pollution some special project should be started immediately in the case of Kanpur. I think that maximum dirt is thrown in it from Kanpur.

Sir, while addressing the Nation, the Prime Minister declared, "the Ganga is a symbol of India, is the source of inspiration to our Puranic tales and poetry and is the bread giver of lakhs of people. Presently, the Ganga is one of the most polluted rivers of India. We will restore its ancient sacredness". Within one month of this declaration, the Central Ganga Authority was constituted. There must be very few countries who might have taken upon themselves such a challenging job. People welcomed this declaration of the Prime Minister with enthusiasm. The programmes are being chalked out to deal with the problem of pollution of cities situated on the banks of the Ganga. Along with it a Rs. 292 crore scheme has been formulated out of which Rs. 240 crores have been allocated under the Seventh Five Year Plan.

One more thing I would like to submit that fish breeding too should be started in the Ganga so that much of the dirt is cleaned. It will be better to have more fish in the Ganga.

Sir, Varanasi is the pivotal point of the Ganga Action Scheme. Unfortunately, it is a heavily polluted city. That is why the work started there first and the Prime Minister inaugurated the scheme on 14 June 1986. Therefore I want that a regional office of the Central Ganga Authority should be set up in Varanasi so that the work may be properly monitored.

Sir, 400 kms. long drainage system in Varanasi is more than 75 years of old and most of the drains were constructed even 200 to 300 years ago. Due to the rapid growth in urban population this old drainage system has almost damaged. I think the plan formulated to improve the condition of this city is not sufficient. I would like to request the Hon. Minister to make it more comprehensive and the old drainage system in Varanasi which has sunk, should be looked into. After making an investigation a comprehensive plan should be formulated so that any intolerable condition does not arise there. If it is not done, the drainage system in Varanasi will remain incomplete and the people will not be much benefited.

Sir, there are 264 Industrial units along the banks of the Ganga out of which 68 units are causing most of the pollution. What concrete measures have been taken to check their pollution. There is a big liquor factory near Nandganj in Ghazipur and its dirty water flows into the Ganga. There are so many industries in Varanasi and their dirty water is also thrown into the Ganga river. Therefore, what arrangement has been made to stop this practice and what provision in this regard has been made in the Budget?

Sir, the dead animals are thrown into the Ganga. What arrangement has been made to stop this practice? Dead bodies of human being are also thrown in it. Therefore, I want to know as to what arrangement are going to be made to stop these practices? The arrangement should be made at every place.

There is also a dire need of 'Sulabh Shauchalayas.' In some places where they are being constructed, the work is going on

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very slowly due to the shortage of cement. I want to know as to what measures are being taken to speed up this work?

The Government has set up implementation machinery in various cities under the Ganga Action Plan but the public representatives have not been associated with them. In our State also, the officers have got this programme approved which create doubts among the people and they do not have informations about it. Therefore, I would like to request the Hon. Minister that in all the cities such as Allahabad, Varanasi, Mirzapur, Patna etc. Where the work is being carried on, the public representatives should be associated so that all sorts of doubts from the people's mind could be removed and the work properly supervised. Such arrangement must be made so that the work could be executed properly. Various countries like Britain, USA, Poland, Nigeria, France etc. have offered assistance for this work. I want that we should take advantage of their experience as to how such work should be carried on. Such works are being executed in Britain, France and Poland also. The Hon. Minister should look into it and tell us about the proposal of the Government. The Hon. Prime Minister inaugurated this work at Varanasi and started the Ganga Seva-Bharat Seva. I would like to request the Hon. Minister that the Ganga Seva-Bharat Seva symbol should be given to every M.P. hang it in his drawing room. It will give inspiration to them to make this task successful. After the completion of this work, it will also be a task of great responsibility to look after it and if such arrangement is not made, it will result in heavy loss to the country. There is need to enforce the Environment Protection Act, 1986, strictly. The Officers of the Central Ganga Authority are working efficiently. They have prepared a very good document of the plan. Therefore, I would like to commend them that they have done a remarkable job through the Central Ganga Authority. I also would like to thank the Hon. Minister that he visited Varanasi and Calcutta in this regard and took keen interest in it. Shri Bhajan Lal and Shri Ansari are diligent leaders and, they are taking keen interest in it and this scheme

will definitely succeed. We believe that the Ganga water never becomes dirty and we shall regain that faith.

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BHAJAN LAL):

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Ganga cleaning work is a very significant one because it is very important not only for Indians but also for all human beings. As has been said by Shri Yadav Sahab that Ganga is a holy river and the man feels blessed after taking a dip in it and it destroys the sins. We believe that immersion of ashes of the deceased person into the Ganga leads him to attain salvation. Our Hon. Prime Minister has done a remarkable job for the humanity as a whole and for the entire world by taking this work in his hand.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, so far as the question of early completion of this work is concerned, I would like to tell Yadav Sahab that out of a total provision of Rs. 249 crores made for this work in the Seventh Five Year Plan, Rs. 116.30 crores for Uttar Pradesh, Rs. 42.46 crores for Bihar and Rs. 133.25 crores for West Bengal have been allocated. The total estimated cost is Rs. 292 crores but under Seventh Five Year Plan, we have earmarked Rs. 240 crores only. We shall make every effort to complete this work as early as possible.

Besides, Yadav Sahab has raised 5 to 7 issues more. The most important point which he has made is that the dirty water of other rivers flows into the Ganga which pollutes its water. Therefore, so long as the water of other tributaries of the Ganga is not cleaned, the cleaning of Ganga water will not be possible and the expenditure being incurred on it will go waste. The suggestion of the Hon. Member carries enough weight but I would like to tell him that if we initiate cleaning other tributaries of the Ganga, that will require much more resources and heavy amount to carry out this work. Beside the Ganga, there are 14 other rivers in our country which are also considered holy rivers. If we want to clean all these rivers, we will require an amount of Rs. 3,000 crores as per an estimate. There are 14 main rivers in our country which are considered holy rivers namely,

the Ganga, the Yamuna, the Godawari, the Krishna, the Narmada, the Mahanadi, the Caveri, the Brahmani, the Sindhu, the Tapti, the Brahmaputra, the Pennar, the Mahi, the Suvarn Rekha and the Sabarmati. Beside these rivers, some other rivers are also under consideration.

But we have initiated the work of cleaning the Ganga and as you know that we have limited resources and due to the shortage of funds we face so many difficulties. Therefore, I would like to tell you that we cannot take up the cleaning work of all rivers simultaneously. We have taken up the work of cleaning the Ganga river and there are 27 big cities on the banks of the Ganga, out of which cleaning work has been initiated in 22 cities. We think that the cleaning work will be completed at some important places within next two years and after that we propose to take up the cleaning work of other rivers referred to by me just now. The priority to undertake the cleaning work of these rivers will be fixed later on. We shall take full care that the cleaning work of other Tributaries of the Ganga which polluted the Ganga water will also be taken up by the Government under the next Five Year Plan.

So far as the flow of Ganga water is concerned, I would like to tell that during the summer season water level decreases in the Ganga and as a result the water flow also slows down and the Ganga river takes the shape of a small stream. Mr. Chairman, Sir, after the completion of cleaning work, clean water will flow in the Ganga whether the water is less or more. Besides, we have also written to the Irrigation department as to how to keep the Ganga water clean. They should make arrangement to keep the water clean and ensure a constant flow in the river. Our Ministry is fully aware of these things.

Another Hon. Member has said that the dirty and poisonous water of some factories falls into the Ganga which is polluting the Ganga water. It is true. We have made proper arrangement for it and for this purpose, we introduced a Bill during the previous session. We have issued notices to these factories and have also issued instructions to them that no factory should throw its dirty

water into the Ganga. Such notices and instructions were issued six months back and they were told that they should set up their own treatment plants. Many factories have given undertaking in the court that they will set up their own treatment plants within one year and if not, they would close their factories.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, so far as the problem of diesel pollution in the Ganga is concerned, I would like to state that we have written to the Transport Ministry to see that some device is fixed on the diesel boats operating in the Ganga river so that the diesel does not leak into the river and the pollution is checked.

It is rightly said that the soil erosion from the Hill areas and silting problem in the Ganga river cause many difficulties. The soil erosion in the hill areas is due to the cutting of trees which create silting problem in the Ganga, the Yamuna and other rivers. We have been always saying that to stop the soil erosion, we will have to protect trees and to meet this end, the cooperation of all people is a must. We propose to introduce a Bill in the current session to provide full protection to the forests.

Besides, it has also been pointed out that the existing treatment plants are not working properly. It is also true. The treatment plants set up at various places are not working properly. Shri Yadavji was also with me when we inspected a treatment plant in the Banaras University which has not been working for the last ten years. Now we hope that the said plant will start working soon. Similarly at various other places also, the old treatment plants have been re-started and at some other places, new treatment plants are being set up so that the dirty water of the cities may not flow into the Ganga river. So far as flow of dirty water is concerned, it is also true. The maximum dirty water is thrown into the Ganga at Kanpur city and then cities like Allahabad, Mirzapur etc. come afterwards. We have formulated a comprehensive plan to see that dirty water is not thrown into the Ganga.

Sir, we are giving too much importance to the Varanasi because it is a historical place and our Hon. Prime Minister has

[Shri Bhajan Lal]

realised its importance. That is why this work was first initiated at Varanasi. We are going to spend Rs. 44 crores in Varanasi alone so that its dirty water does not flow into the Ganga river.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, An Hon. Member has referred to fish-breeding. We have formulated a programme for fish-breeding as well. The water after due treatment would be collected in a reservoir and utilised for fish-breeding or supplied to the farmers for irrigation.

Sir, similarly he has said that a regional office should also be there. We have decided to open regional offices in 3 states namely, U.P., Bihar and West Bengal.

SHRI SAYAM LAL YADAV : Sir, I have requested that a regional Office should be opened at Varanasi.

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : We propose to locate this office at Allahabad where there is a confluence of the three rivers and also because it is situated in the midway from where every area can be covered. Otherwise it will remain on one side.

Sir, another point has been made and it is that the water and sewage disposal system is not working properly. The drainage system is very old. It is about 70 to 75 years old. Although it is the responsibility of the Municipality and the city people but still we want that proper arrangement should be made there so that the Ganges is cleaned properly.

So far as throwing of dead animals into the river is concerned, we are looking into it.

SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV : Will you conduct an inquiry into the water and sewage disposal system ?

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : Yes, we will conduct an inquiry. We will see that the State Government spends some money and the Central Government also gives some assistance so that the work can be completed.

There was a reference about *Sulabh Shauchalayas*. A Scheme for the same is under our consideration.

So, far as association of representatives of the people is concerned, I have talked to the Chief Minister today itself. In Varanasi and everywhere high-powered committees have already been constituted. These committees consist of M.P.s as Members and the Chief Minister as a Chairman. Today we have decided that the inquiry committees at the Divisional level should consist of M.P.s and those should be headed by a state Minister of the Department concerned, so that M.P.s and M.L. As can be associated with them.

Similarly so far as foreign assistance is concerned, we are making full use of the foreign technology. We have invited tenders from outside also.

Thereafter he referred to the symbol "Ganga Seva, Bharat Seva", we will send it to all the M.P.s. Thus the Government of India is taking keen interest, but the co-operation of all the officers and the representatives of the people is also important and that we are getting.

DR. G. S. RAJHANS (Jharkhand) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I was born on a bank of the Ganga, hence I am emotionally involved in it. It is an emotional relationship. I mean that when you talk about the pollution of the Ganga river you may think of Bihar and stop at Patna. You think that pollution is there only at Patna city and if it is checked, then the Ganga flowing across the entire State of Bihar will be cleaned as well.

But it is not so. In Patna there is not even one-fourth of the pollution. When the River Ganga flows beyond Patna through a place called Mokama where the Bata Shoe Company is located, maximum pollution is there. The dirty water of water of Barauni refinery flows into the Ganga. In Munger there are pollution causing industries, dirty water of which falls into the Ganga. There is extreme pollution in Sultanganj which is situated between Munger and Bhagalpur. It should be remembered that 50 to 60 lakhs of people bathe in the River Ganga at

Sultanganj and take that water to their homes as well. If you cannot check pollution here then where will you check it? There is a lot of pollution beyond this area as well.

I would like to submit one more point. Japan has evolved a technology. Fishing is not allowed in polluted rivers. Some chemical is transfused into the fish and they start eating the pollution causing elements in the river and thus the water becomes clean. Will the Government make some arrangements to see that fishing is not allowed in such rivers.

I want to submit that the Hon. Prime Minister has stated in the very beginning that we will clean the Ganga, through voluntary contribution of labour. How this will be ensured in Bihar.

SHRI KAMLA PRASAD SINGH (Jaunpur) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Government has taken a very good step. I fully support it. The water of the River Ganga has to be mixed in *Panchamrit* the mixture of milk, curd, sugar, ghee and honey for purification of heart.

Corpses can be found lying on the banks of the River Ganga in cities like, Kanpur and others. Some of those are half burnt and others are just thrown there, which is shocking. Has the Government any scheme to construct a crematorium there?

[English]

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK (Panaji) : There is an Act known as Environment Protection Act 1986. There is also an Act known as Water Protection Act, 1974. There is also an Act known as Air Protection Act 1981. In all these Acts there is no provision for a private individual to take a sample and give it to a laboratory for its testing. As a result of this, no private citizen can prosecute any person who does that pollution. Similarly, in both these Acts,

Water Protection Act as well as Air Protection Act, the punishment that is provided for is merely a fine. But the latest Environment Protection Act says that if an offence is committed under the Air Protection Act and the Water Protection Act, then the person shall be charged under those Acts and not the Environment Protection Act 1986. That means under that Act, it is only a fine. Therefore, are you going to move any amendment to nullify that Act or to make it more stringent?

[Translation]

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : Mr. Chairman, Sir, just now the Hon. Member has referred to industries like the Bata Shoe Company in Bihar. The Bata Shoe Company is setting up its plant there and the work is going on. Secondly, he wants to know the names of cities at which this work is going on. In Bihar, the work is going on in Patna, Chhapra, Munger and Bhagalpur and we will complete it very soon. Thus 21 schemes are being implemented in 4 cities.

The Hon. Member wants an amendment in the law. Even otherwise any individual can do it and it is not necessary that only the Government should take action against it. An individual also has the same right and there is no restriction in this regard. If the Member reads the Act, he will find that there is some difference between the Air and Water Acts. Hence, it is being amended to remove the same. In addition, electric crematoria are being set up at 18 other places.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : The House now stands adjourned to meet on Monday, 30th March, 1987 at 11 A.M.

18.38 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, the 30th March, 1987/ Chaitra 9, 1909 (Saka).