

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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11.02 hrs.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Thursday, August 23, 1990/Bhadra 1,
1912, (Saka)

[English]

Container Transshipment Terminal at Vallarpadam

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

ANNOUNCEMENT BY SPEAKER

**Re. Submissions on matters of urgent
Public Importance**

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members will recall that on 24th April, 1990, I had informed the House that in accordance with the wishes of Leaders of various parties and groups in the House, seven members would be allowed to raise with the permission of the Chair matters of urgent public importance after the Question Hour provided notices were received by 10.30 hrs. Yesterday, I had another meeting with the Leaders of various parties and groups in Lok Sabha. It was agreed that the time for tabling notices for making brief submissions on matters of urgent public importance after the Question Hour might be fixed at 10.00 hours instead of 10.30 hours.

This will give me adequate time for considering the matters sought to be raised by hon. Members.

*203. PROF. K.V. THOMAS: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Dutch Consultants have submitted their report on the international container transshipment terminal at Vallarpadam, Cochin;

(b) if so, the recommendations thereof; and

(c) the decision taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) The Dutch Consultants M/s Frederic R Harris have completed only Phase-I of the Feasibility Study. Phase-II of the Study is expected to be submitted later this year

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

PROF. K.V. THOMAS: Sir, containerisation of cargo has made a key change in the handling and shipment of cargo. Colombo and Cochin started handling containers in 1973. Now, Colombo handles five lakh TUs of containers which is equivalent to the containers handled by the entire Indian ports. This is the fantastic growth of Colombo. It can also be seen that 80 per cent of the traffic

handled by Colombo is either to India or from India. This shows the need for a modern port which can handle transshipment terminals. My request is that Cochin being the nearest to the international shipping route, it should have a modern transshipment terminal. On the basis of the recommendations made by M/s Federic R Harris, which has done a feasibility study with the help of Dutch technical assistance and which has given its Phase-I Study Report, it is found that Cochin is commercially viable. So, taking into consideration all these factors, will you take action to have a modern transshipment terminal at Cochin?

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN: Sir, the points mentioned by the hon. Member are well taken. The changes in the international transport system, accompanied by containerization in the international sea trade, have resulted in what is known as load centres around certain vital ports. To achieve maximum economies inherent in the container concept itself, it is very important that we should also fall in line and develop our own ports to meet this requirement. We have examples, apart from Colombo which the hon. Member has mentioned, of Hongkong and Singapore, which have developed and captured most of the transshipment business of the region and as a result have become one of the largest ports today. It was around 1984 or so that the Cochin Port themselves felt the need for transformation of this port into a container terminal and approached the Government of India, Ministry of transport, for building this port as a container terminal and transshipment centre. The Government of India also found it attractive and viable concept. The Cochin port falls along the principal trade routes of the region and principal shipping lines use this route. Therefore, we thought we could also extract much of the business that is presently handled at Colombo. That is why we accepted the basic parameter of this concept and appointed Messrs Federic R Harris as our consultants. As I have mentioned, at this stage, they have only submitted Phase I of the report and now we expect their final

report very soon on the basis of which we shall take further decision.

PROF. K.V. THOMAS: It has also been observed that the present sabotage regulations that exist in our country prevent the transshipment from Indian ports by foreign vessels. This particular regulation was enacted to help the Indian Customs. But as the time has changed and transshipment has become a necessity for modernization of the cargo handling, I would request the Government to relax this sabotage regulation for Indian ports, which can be developed as transshipment terminals. At present, this regulation only helps Colombo because this regulation does not restrict the transshipment at Colombo. Will the Government look into this and see that this regulation is adequately changed as that our Indian ports which can handle the transshipment are helped?

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN: There are a number of related issues and the exemption from the sabotage regulation is one of the issues. Already a Study Group of the Ministry is looking into this and a report is awaited any time and we shall take action based on that report.

PROF. SAVITHRI LAKSHMANAN: Sir, how many containers have been handled by the Indian ports during the last five years and what steps have been taken to facilitate container handling in our ports?

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN: Cochin port at the moment handles about 7.11 million tonnes of container traffic; it has gone up to about 40,000 TUCs. But it will have to go up in a much bigger way if the scenario which has been subjected to the study by the feasibility report has to be met, and if it is developed as a container terminal.

SHRI K. MURALEEDHARAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the Minister which of the ports are having the facility of transshipment.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN: Sir, the

transshipment facilities are there but as hon. Prof. Thomas referred to, there are certain restrictions in ports because of abotage. So, there are certain restrictions, but this is entirely a different concept. What we are trying to do at Vallarpadam is making it entirely a container terminal. It is totally a new container terminal where containers will be transhipped to not only different parts of India but different parts of the world.

[*Translation*]

World Bank Loan to Maharashtra for Construction of Roads

*204. SHRIBALASAHEB VIKHEPATIL: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the total World Bank loan assistance proposed to be given to Maharashtra Government for road development this year;

(b) the details of proposals sent by Maharashtra Government and the time by which these proposals are likely to be cleared; and

(c) the expenditure involved therein?

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) and (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) For the development of State roads in Maharashtra under World Bank Loan Assistance, an expenditure of Rs. 18 crore is expected during the current financial year against which an amount of Rs. 9.00 crore would be reimbursable by the World Bank.

(b) and (c). In Maharashtra, there is only one proposal relating to National Highways, namely 4-laning of Bassein Creek-Manor Section (total length 58 kms) on NH-No. 8 at an estimated cost of Rs. 84.00

crores which has been projected to the World Bank for assistance. The loan negotiations with the World Bank have not taken place.

SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the outset, I would like to submit that on the one hand, the question put by me was bit modified and on the other hand the reply is not complete. Therefore, I would like to put some supplementaries. As the hon. Minister has stated in his reply that in Maharashtra, there is only one proposal relating to National Highways, namely 4-laning Highway at an estimated cost of Rs. 1800 crore. In addition to it, there are some other proposals regarding construction of State High Ways also. I would like to know the number of proposals of State High ways accepted by the Centre and the number of proposals still under consideration of the Government. I would also like to know the number of proposals returned to the State Government on the ground of non-availability of funds as also the total funds made available to Maharashtra Government during the last year and current year by the Central Government and the World Bank? So far as I know it takes a long time in obtaining approval of the World Bank and a proposal is approved and technical sanction is granted first by the Government of India, then only it is forwarded to the World Bank for assistance. In view of inadequate of roads in Maharashtra, there was a proposal to involve some industries and other agencies in construction of new roads and maintenance thereof.

I would like to know as to how many how responded to this proposal to Maharashtra Government, the number and names thereof and the roads and bridges for which they have shown interest? I would also like to know the number of proposals approved by the Centre and the estimated cost involved in each case.

[*English*]

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN: Sir, I would like to make a clear distinction because ... (*Interruptions*) ...