

[English]

Strike by Port Workers at New Mangalore Port

*64. SHRI M.V. CHANDRASEKHARA MURTHY. Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state

(a) whether the mini steel Plants in Karnataka and Kerala have stopped production for want of scrap due to strike by port workers at the New Mangalore port.

(b) how much scrap is lying in various vessels at the port and

(c) the remedial steps Government propose to take in view of difficulties being experienced by mini steel plants in Karnataka and Kerala?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN) (a) No, Sir

(b) There is no scrap vessel waiting for berth in the Port

(c) Continuous efforts are being made to settle the dispute both by the Central Industrial Relations Machinery as well as the Port Authorities

SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKARA MURTHY Mr Speaker, Sir, the workers of the New Mangalore Port are on strike since November 17 and almost 45 days are now over. Even the Chairman of the Steel Furnace Association of Southern Region has represented to the Ministry. He has sent telegrams to the Secretary, Ministry of Surface Transport and also to the concerned Labour Relations Officers. But so far no action has been taken. I would like to know whether it has come to the notice of the Ministry that the workers are on illegal strike, as alleged by the Association, and they are pressuring the users of the port to get an illegal cash payment of Rs. Seven to eight as *mamul* for each worker per shift.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN: Sir, the hon. Member is aware that the question relates to the hardships put to the steel plants of Karnataka and Kerala as a result of the strike. As far as this point is concerned, this has been answered. The hon. Member has said that we have not taken any action. It is not true. I would like to point out that there is a difference between other major ports of India and the New Mangalore Port, in the sense that the cargo handling operations in the new Mangalore Port are not handled by the Dock Labour Board, as in the case of other major ports. The Port Trust also does not have its own labour force in this port. There is a pool of 1,181 workers there who have an association of their own, known as the New Mangalore Port Listed Workers Managing Committee, and they conduct these cargo handling operations. There has been a dispute since mid-November. Probably there was a dispute earlier also where the workers had demanded speed money, which is certainly an illegal demand. Since then a number of efforts have been made both by the Labour Commissioner and the Regional Labour Commissioner. It is not correct to say that we have not been aware of the problem or the port authorities have not taken steps seriously. A number of efforts have been made. I am sure, the hon. Members as well as the other distinguished Members belonging to the State of Karnataka are aware as to who these leaders are. Our efforts would continue to see that the Port is made serviceable once again, but I would request the hon. Members and the new Government of Karnataka also to join us in finding a solution to this problem.

SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKARA MURTHY: I would like to know whether it is a fact that the output of this cargo handling at the New Mangalore Port is the lowest among all the ports in India when compared to ports like Madras, they are doing nearly 1700 and 1800 MT per day and what steps the Government propose to take to improve their performance.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN: As I explained, we should try and make our efforts

to improve productivity in all ports including New Mangalore Port and I would once again request the hon. Member and his friends who are well-known and recognised leaders of the area to join us in our effort to increase productivity. It is true that Madras Port has higher rate of productivity compared even to Bombay Port and even in relation to Mangalore, I would particularly appeal to the hon. Member and his Party to join us in finding a solution for some other specific problems relating to it. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKARA MURTHY: We can set up a Dock Labour Board there.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN: We shall consider this suggestion

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: May I know from the hon. Minister what is the loss of earnings due to this strike and whether the Government is going to fix the norms for this speed money if it is a legal one?

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN: Well, there can be no norms as far as speed money is concerned, and it is an illegal demand and we cannot accept this, nor can it be quantified. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: What is the loss of earnings of the port due to this strike?

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN: The Port has lost more than Rs. 50 lakhs as a result of the strike according to the information available.

SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI: Mr. Speaker, I am the one who is very much affected by this strike. For your information, almost my one unit was closed for want of this movement of traffic. Will the Minister please examine the suggestion that instead

of sending this scrap to the Mangalore Port from the MMTC, which is canalising agency, is it not advisable to send the entire scrap to Madras Port? Not only the labourers are on strike, but every time it is very difficult to transport this scrap from Mangalore due to continuous rains. Even the lorries also are not in a position to move this scrap to various places. In view of these difficulties faced by the industrial transporters, will you please advise the MMTC to send the entire scrap or imported scrap to Madras Port instead of to this Mangalore Port until it is improved?

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN: Obviously there seems to be some kind of a conflict of interests between the distinguished Member of Parliament and an industrialist. As a Member of Parliament I should have thought that the hon. Member would want the Mangalore Port to prosper and help other leaders in finding a solution for that problem. I am unable to accept the suggestion, but I shall certainly, if she feels strongly about it, in terms of her personal interest, look into it. (*Interruptions*)

Communal Riots

*65 SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH:
SHRI CHITTA BASU:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of communal riots which took place in different parts of the country during the last six months, State-wise;

(b) the loss of life and property in those riots; and

(c) the steps to contain these riots?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMED SAYEED): (a) to (c). A Statement is given below.