

Ganga Water Issue

*105. SHRI + AMAR ROY-
PRADHAN :—
SHRI MADHAVRAO
SCINDIA :

Will the Minister of IRRIGATION be pleased to state :

(a) the latest position in connection with the Ganga Water Issue between Bangladesh and India;

(b) the number of times meetings were held between the representatives of the two countries on this specific issue; and

(c) the action Government propose to take now in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI) : (a) to (c). A Statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c). In pursuance of the Indo-Bangladesh Agreement of November, 1977 on sharing of the Ganga Waters at Farakka and on augmenting its flows, the sharing of the Ganga waters at Farakka between 1st January and 31st May each year since 1978 is being implemented satisfactorily in conformity with the Agreement. As regards long-term arrangements regarding augmentation of the dry season flows of the Ganga, the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission considered the two schemes, one proposed by India and another by Bangladesh and held discussions on commencing studies thereon from its 14th to 20th meetings (January 1978 to August 1980) but was unable to make headway and make recommendations within the stipulated period of 3 years. At the time of the first review of the Agreement, this aspect was also noted. Both sides also noted that appropriate and adequate measures for finding a solution to the problem of augmentation of the flows of the

Ganga would have to be decided upon by the two Governments. This subject was discussed between the Foreign Ministers of India and Bangladesh in September 1981 when it was decided that the two Foreign Ministers would discuss further measures in this regard. The next review of the Agreement is scheduled for May 1982.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, you know it very well that the Farrkka Barrage through which the Ganga waters flow is the life-line of Calcutta Port and Calcutta is the heart of not only West Bengal but the entire East and North-Eastern region. Sir, in the Statement it has been mentioned that the sharing of the Ganga waters at Farakka between 1st January and 31st May each year since 1978 is being implemented 'satisfactorily' in conformity with the Agreement. I do not know why he has mentioned 'satisfactorily'. Sir, you know that 40,000 cusecs of water is a must for normal irrigation flow of the Ganga in lean months. At present 20,000 to 24,000 cusecs of water are being supplied. This amount of supply of water has been continuing for two years. Sometimes the supply was only 11,000 cusecs or so. Under these circumstances, I do not know how the supply of water could be satisfactory. Just now 21st session has been over. What is the result of this session? It has produced nothing. The Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh has said, according to the press, that the issue will now be tackled at political level and he stated that the Ganga Water distribution should be settled in a tripartite talk between India, Bangladesh and Nepal. He has mentioned that Nepal should be included. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister the reaction of the Indian Government and whether the proposal has been finalised or not.

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI : As far as supply of water to Bangladesh is concerned, we have fully implemented

the Agreement which was entered into in November 1977 and that was our international commitment. We implemented that agreement. Of course, it is true that in certain lean years, the supply to Calcutta Port was much below the requirements.

As far the proposal of Bangladesh to include Nepal for the study of the project with regard to the augmentation of Ganga water during dry season, we are not agreeing and we have not agreed to that proposal. As a matter of fact, this is a bilateral agreement and our view point is: let these two countries, which are parties to this bilateral agreement, India and Bangladesh find out a permanent solution to this problem. And if at some later stage, there is any necessity of taking up the matter with the third country, we can consider it, but let us first find out a solution ourselves. As this is a bilateral agreement, only the two countries, India and Bangladesh, should find out a permanent solution to this problem. This is a fact that the JRC, in its 14th to 20th meetings could not find a permanent solution to this problem. India had given a proposal which was not acceptable to them, and the proposal which they put forward before the JRC was not acceptable to us. In the review, which is provided for in the agreement, we have agreed that the permanent solution has to be found out at appropriate level, political level, of both the countries, India and Bangladesh. This is the position in a nutshell.

As far as the main question is concerned, we are not agreeing to the proposal that Nepal should be made a party to this bilateral agreement.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN : Bangladesh has given another proposal demanding that the entire water disputes between Bangladesh and India should be settled, that is all disputes with regard to Ganga river, Brahmaputra river, Teesta river,

Khoai, Gomti and Muhari rivers in Tripura should be settled in a package deal. What is the reaction of the Government and whether the Government is agreeing to this proposal ?

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION (SHRI KEDAR PANDAY) : I have been to Bangladesh for two days and I came back last night. We had a lot of discussions with respect to other rivers including Teesta river, border and common rivers. This is one of the terms of the agreement that we must try our level best to see that waters of these other rivers should be utilised for the benefit of the two countries. There are so many rivers. We discussed a few of them, but certain data, facts and figures have to be collected and we are going to discuss these again. We have discussed a lot, but no solution has been found due to lack of certain data. We shall be meeting again in the month of June—I mean, the JRC meeting—and there we shall discuss these matters.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN : Will you discuss the Ganges waters separately ?

SHRI KEDAR PANDAY : So far as the Ganga River water dispute is concerned, that is a different problem; it is with regard to augmentation of the Ganga waters in the lean period of five months, January, February, March, April and May. That we have discussed a lot, but we could not find a solution at the level of JRC, and that matter has been referred to the higher level. We could not discuss the Ganga Water issue; that is beyond its scope now. So far as other rivers are concerned, We have discussed that. And we feel that so far as the question of flood control and the utilisation of water of those rivers is concerned, we should discuss with them. We are in the midst of discussion. No solution has been found and we shall be meeting again in the month of June to discuss those questions.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : The task before us is to make the Bangladesh Government understand that the real issue is not the short-term sharing of Farakka waters, which keep coming up from time to time if they treat it as such, but the long term augmentation of the Ganga waters in Farakka by the building of huge reservoirs on the Bramhaputra and linking it up with the Ganga. This would augment the flow by one lakh cusecs and totally fulfil all Bangladesh requirements thereby making Farakka a total non-issue. I would, therefore, like to know from the Hon. Minister (a) what steps is the Government envisaging to further convince the Bangladesh Government about the tremendous benefits that would accrue in a large measure more to Bangladesh than to India, if that country accepts such a long-term agreement? (b) It is Technically possible to undertake this augmentation and link up through the tributaries of the Teesta and the Bramhaputra within Indian soil, on our own? And (c) if the answer is yes, which I think it is, and if the Bangladesh Government's opposition and intransigence continue would the Government of India undertake this long-term scheme unilaterally?

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI : As far as Part (a) of the question is concerned, I have already said that in its six meetings the JRC has failed to find out any solution. Therefore, while reviewing the Agreement we agreed that the matter should be taken up at the higher political level. Our Hon. External Affairs Minister and the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh met and had some talks regarding the issue and the talks are in progress.

Part (b) of the question is a highly sensitive issue and there is no doubt that we are very much aware of our requirements of water and are exploring all area for solving our own problems of irrigation and flood

control. We are doing everything to convince the Bangladesh Government about the benefits which will accrue to both the countries—to Bangladesh and to India.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Can I intervene, Sir? The sensitive part of the question is part (c). Part (b) was : Is it technically possible or not? Answer should be yes or no. The Hon. Minister may first give answer to part (b) of the question.

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI : Sir, our Engineers have made studies and have found that technically it is possible to take up those projects unilaterally. But as far as part (c) of the question is concerned i.e. whether the Government of India proposes to take up those projects unilaterally, I would say that it is too early to say anything on this. And I hope the Hon. Member will not press because this is a sensitive question affecting the relationship with our neighbouring country.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH : The question is whether any long term solution is found or not. Meanwhile if the flow of water upto 40,000 cusecs is not sufficient—over a number of years we are not getting that water—it means Calcutta Port is gradually dying out. Then, how are you going to find a solution to this problem?

I also understand that there was a proposal for Brahmaputra—Ganga link-up. In fact, I raised it long ago. After that, Government of India took it up, but Bangladesh has refused to agree to it. Therefore, the question put by Mr. Scindia is quite relevant, because Brahmaputra is a unique flow river, having almost 2.5 lakh cusecs. So, even if 1 lakh cusecs are drawn away from Brahmaputra, Bangladesh cannot suffer. So, if it can be joined across our territory, not depending upon Bangladesh territory, then a long term solution can be

found. These are the two simple questions: how a short term solution can be found, because it will require quite a number of years, or a decade. Meanwhile, Calcutta Port will dry up. Then, some waters from the upper reaches of Ganga can be made available, so that we can consider utilizing ground water on a bigger scale in the upper reaches for irrigation purposes.

We want to know how you are going to solve the problem. How long will it continue hanging fire till the Port is dead? Then there will be no necessity for finding a solution.

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI : As far as I could understand the question of the Hon. Member, he still wants to know about our plans for future development.

The question of having a long term solution is already at a higher political level. Hon. Member was speaking, as if he was convincing us. We are already convinced about our proposal of Brahmaputra-Ganges link. It is a question of convincing the other country, viz. Bangladesh. As far as we are concerned, we are fully convinced about the proposal of Brahmaputra—Ganges link canal, which will be beneficial to India, as well as Bangladesh. There is no question of not being convinced. But the whole question is that Bangladesh has to be convinced. Unfortunately, till now Bangladesh could not be convinced about this fact, and we are taking every step to convince it.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY : He says, bring it *via* Siliguri.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH : He is evading the question.

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI : What is this proposal—*via* Siliguri? Do you want to refer to the proposal of Bangladesh? It was their proposal.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : There is a proposal for doing it *via* Siliguri. Will you go in for it? Or, will you give water from the upper reaches? These are the two simple questions which have been complicated.....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : The Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Issue of Completion Certificates by D.D.A. to House Owners

*106. SHRI MOHAMMAD ASRAR AHMAD : Will the Minister of WORKS AND HOUSING be pleased to state :

- (a) whether it is a fact that D. D. A. is taking a long time for the issue of Completion Certificate to house owners of DDA Colonies;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) the number of Completion Certificates issued during the year 1981;
- (d) the number of cases pending with DDA ; and
- (e) whether Completion Certificate from DDA is necessary for DESU to sanction a Permanent Electricity Connection, if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND WORKS AND HOUSING (SHRI BISHMA NARAIN SINGH) : (a) and (b). The DDA has reported that Completion Certificate is generally issued in about a month's time, if the owner rectifies the defects/complies with the observations of the inspecting staff and submits the requisite documents. In cases where there are no deviations from the sanctioned plans and the requisite documents are submitted with the application for completion certificates, the completion certificates are issued promptly.

(c) About 2,000

(d) About 2,000

(e) No, Sir