

SHRI A. B. A. GHANI KHAN CHAUDHURI: When the scheme is not yet ready, how can the World Bank examine it? The question does not arise.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: May I know who were the engineers at work in the preliminary stage? How could the estimate vary from Rs. 24,000 crores to Rs. 12 hundred million crores? I want to know if the investigation was made really seriously from the beginning. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether in view of the serious drought conditions in the chronic drought-affected States of the eastern region the Minister will like to tell the House that the Government would seriously consider for getting through this project and if so, can we expect that by the year 1985 or 1986 some beginning could be made?

SHRI A. B. A. GHANI KHAN CHAUDHURI: We are very much serious on this and during the floods in the Ganga a lot of water is wasted and we do not want water to be wasted. We want to utilise it for irrigation purposes. But the trouble is that a proper scheme has to be made. So the engineers are at work. At the earliest opportunity I think I will be able to tell you. But at the present moment I am not in a position to spell it out.

#### Review of agreement between India and Bangladesh on the Sharing of Ganga Waters

\*19. SHRI CHITTA BASU: Will the Minister of ENERGY AND IRRIGATION AND COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the agreement between India and Bangladesh on the sharing of the Ganga Waters at Farakka has been found to be detrimental to the interests of Calcutta Port;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to review the agreement;

(c) if so, whether any step has since been initiated in this direction; and

(d) if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND IRRIGATION AND COAL (SHRI A. B. A. GHANI KHAN CHAUDHURI): (a) to (d). A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

#### Statement

(a) to (d). It was recognized by both India and Bangladesh that during there lean season there is not enough water in the Ganga to meet the requirements of both the countries. The Agreement of November 1977 which envisages interim arrangements on the sharing of Ganga Waters at Farakka was therefore arrived at in the spirit of mutual accommodation. As such, the Calcutta Port cannot derive full benefits possible with the Farakka Project. This Agreement would remain in force for a period of 5 years from November, 1977 and provides for reviews—the first review being at the expiry of 3 years, and subsequent review six months before the expiry of the Agreement. Steps will be initiated at the appropriate time for the review of the Agreement as envisaged therein.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: I have gone through the Statement. There has been a number of expert committees on the question of determining the minimum discharge necessary at the Farakka point. Of these expert committees I only want to mention or refer to two opinions given by two experts on the subject.

Mr. S. C. Mitra, Chairman, Technical Advisory Committee, Farakka Project in his report held that 40,000 cusecs was the minimum discharge necessary at the Farakka point. Another report

is from Dr. Walter Hansen. He was of the opinion that a supply of the order of somewhat higher than 40,000 cusecs is needed throughout the whole year to reverse the process of sanding up, the ship routes to the Calcutta harbour.

Despite these two expert reports, according to the agreement between India and Bangladesh on the question of sharing the waters of Ganga between the two countries, 11,000 to 16,000 cusecs of water would be available from the Farakka point. May I know from the hon. Minister whether it is not a fact that due to the paucity of discharge of water from the Farakka point, the navigability of the Ganga has decreased to a very large extent endangering the very existence of the Calcutta port itself? Is it also not a fact that the salinity of the Ganga water has also increased to the detriment of the health of the Calcutta's population? If so, what particular step do the Government of India propose to take to check the decrease in the navigability of the Ganga and the increase in the salinity of the Ganga water having regard to the view that these are national questions?

SHRI A. B. A. GHANI KHAN CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, nobody disputes with regard to 40,000 cusecs of water which is required to save Calcutta port and control the salinity of water in the river Hooghly.

But the point is that the agreement entered into has two aspects—one aspect is a short-term thing and the other is a long-term thing. With the short-term thing, it may appear to all of us concerned that Calcutta Port is not having adequate water. This is true in short-term view. But the basic point for which we entered into an agreement is how to augment the Ganga Water. This is the basic thing. For that purpose, we entered into an agreement which is of a specific type. You know what the agreement provides for. This is a bilateral agreement bet-

ween India and Bangladesh. If you see that, we are not having all the mutual benefits wanted. Obviously, we have to think of something else. I do not know it at the present moment. At an appropriate time we have to think of this. But, in thinking of the short-term period that Calcutta Port is having only 20,000 cusecs of water, we should not overlook the broader aspect of this. The broader aspect is necessary for both the countries—India and Bangladesh. That is the position at the present moment. About 40,000 cusecs of water, I would like to tell the hon. Member, there is no dispute on this.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: I want to know whether the Government of India availed of the opportunity of the visit of the Bangladesh President recently and the matter was discussed with him by our Prime Minister in order to bring about a peaceful and friendly solution. May I also know from the hon. Minister whether there has been a series of alternatives found out to augment the water on the Farakka Barrage; during the mutual discussions by Bangladesh and India, what are the concrete proposals given by the Bangladesh Government and also the proposals given by the Government of India.

SHRI A. B. A. GHANI KHAN CHAUDHURI: As I informed the hon. Member in the long term solution we shall consider all this. The Indian proposals are like this. The scheme of Ganga Brahmaputra Link is for diverting waters from Brahmaputra to Ganga from the proposed Joghigopa Barrage in Assam to Farakka Barrage. The gravity canal can divert up to one lakh cusecs for the use of Bangladesh and India. This scheme also envisages supplementation of the Brahmaputra flows at the appropriate stage by storages on the Dihang, Subansiri and Barak rivers to be built in India. These proposals

would increase the water flows in the dry season. But, what I was trying to impress on the hon. Member is that one lakh cusecs of water augmentation will be if one day it succeeds; besides providing flood control on the Brahmaputra and Barak, it will generate about 10 million kilowatts of hydro-power besides providing for navigation etc. This is the Indian proposal. The Bangladesh proposal is that they propose storages in India and Nepal on Ganga and the tributaries for augmentation of Ganga flows, and also providing an international navigation canal from Gandak river along the Nepal terai and the Siliguri neck of India into Bangladesh. These proposals are being considered by the Joint River Commission. The main objection of Bangladesh to our proposal is that land acquisition of 20,000 acres is needed for the canal in Bangladesh. Bangladesh have also not so far agreed to any study of the two schemes by expert teams of the Joint River Commission. They have been arguing that since the proposal includes storages in Nepal that country should also be made a participant in the study of Bangladesh proposal by modifying the statute of Joint River Commission or by setting up a new three-nation ministerial level body or setting up a three-nation experts team.

SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA: I do not know why the hon'ble Minister is trying to defend an agreement entered into by the Janata government which is totally detrimental to India's interests. As far as long-term and short-term matters are concerned I would like to point out that in the matter of international agreements five years cannot be considered a long-term agreement. We want to be fair with Bangladesh but what has to be kept in mind is that 90 per cent of the catchment area is in India and 85 per cent of the length of the river is also in India and for Bihar and Uttar Pradesh which are economically backward States we will need tremendous

irrigation potential in future which only Ganga can provide. The Minister just said the Bangladesh has some objection. I am told they are not prepared to enter into a long-term agreement unless a broad agreement on river waters is arrived at involving both Nepal and China and including Brahmaputra. I would like to know what is the governments's reaction to this attitude of Bangladesh because when a large length of the river is flowing in our country I do not think that other countries should be involved. It should be a bilateral agreement with Bangladesh and we should not agree to the principle of involving ourselves in negotiation with other countries.

SHRI A. B. A. GHANI KHAN CHAUDHURI: In the agreement specific time period is mentioned and before that time period expires will I think we should not spell out anything. One thing, I would like to mention, is that our entire intention is for bilateral agreement with Bangladesh. We want to come to some sort of understanding with Bangladesh and not with any other third party. Bangladesh probably wants that Nepal and other people should come in. That is another basic objection we have. We want to have bilateral understanding. For example, with Nepal we have some problems. We want to enter into bilateral agreement with Nepal. I think it will not be proper for me to express my views on this unless appropriate moment comes.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: I would like to know whether the hon'ble Minister is aware of the fact that subsequent to this agreement signed between India and Bangladesh there has been further deterioration in the river below Calcutta port due to two reasons. One is the emergence of an entirely new island which has come up from under the water which did not exist at the time of the agreement. Secondly, the main bar, the sand bar, which obstructs the movement of vessels known as Bellary bar has deteriorated consi-

derably over the last year. The amount of water for which the agreement provides discharge from the Ganga at Farakka is now even more inadequate than it was at that time on the basis of the expert report. Whether in view of this the clause in the agreement which provides for a periodical review will be taken advantage of by our government to see that these new factors which have come into existence do not add to the detrimental character of the flow of the river below Calcutta?

**SHRI A. B. A. GHANI KHAN CHAUDHURI:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon'ble Member must be aware of the fact that in Calcutta port in lean months with less than 40,000 cusecs of water there is bound to be a problem. Nothing else can solve this problem fully. We know this. (*Interruptions*) We entered into an agreement. We have the Joint River Commission, and that is why these exchanges have taken place. But, unless this 5 year period is over, I don't think anything can be done on this.

**SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA :** I seek your protection, Mr. Speaker. There is a clause in the agreement. If I am wrong, he will please correct me. Though it is a 5 year agreement there is a provision for the periodical review every year. In view of this clause which I have mentioned, should that review not be undertaken?

**SHRI A. B. A. GHANI KHAN CHAUDHURI:** Sir, I don't think there is anything like that. We cannot get away with the parent agreement.

**SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER:** I raised this question in the Fifth and the Sixth Lok Sabha.

**SHRI A. B. A. GHANI KHAN CHAUDHURI:** The hon. Member raised a very important issue. As far as I have been able to read the agreement, I have not been able to find any such clause. However, since the hon. Mem-

ber has raised this issue, I will certainly go through that and let him know.

**SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER:** Now at least the Minister has admitted that to save the Calcutta Port at least 40,000 cusecs of water will be required in the lean period, in the lean months. The Minister has admitted that there is agreement between India and Bangladesh. Regarding Ganga water flow through Farakka barrage, the position should be reviewed. The Minister has agreed. So, I want to know from the Minister categorically whether he is going to take up this issue with the Bangladesh Government, to review the position as early as possible.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has already been answered.

**SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER:** The agreement is that we will get 43,000 cusecs of water.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It has already been answered. Next question.

**Practice to allow Opposition to express its views after Broadcast by Prime Minister**

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\*21. **PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE:**  
**SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE:**

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the practice of allowing the opposition to express its views following the broadcast by the Prime Minister has been discontinued; and

(b) if so, the reasons thereof?

**THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND SUPPLY AND REHABILITATION (SHRI VASANT SATHE):** (a) and (b). The practice followed by All India Radio/Door-darshan since 1977 is that whenever the Prime Minister broadcasts to the