

his answer. We have no prejudice one way or the other. But the question is whether we should accept that translation as authorised text, as authorised translation or not. We cannot place ourselves in an anomalous situation where the courts will say that this is not the text and we will not look at it. Therefore we want to be sure of it; there is no prejudice and there is no hesitation in considering that also.

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA:
You have taken 22 years.

**Erosion of Ganga in Murshidabad District
Down-Stream Farakka Barrage**

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*7. **SHRI TRIDIB CHAUDHURI,**
DR. H. P. SHARMA:

Will the Minister of of IRRIGATION AND POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the statement made by Shri A.B.K. Ghani Chowdhury, Minister of Irrigation and Waterways, West Bengal to the Press in Calcutta on 27th January 1973 and published in all Calcutta papers on 28th January 1973 to the effect that the Central Government and the Farakka Barrage authorities were responsible for the prolonged neglect of the problem of erosion of Ganga in the Murshidabad District down-stream Farakka Barrage;

(b) whether the West Bengal Government has sent an S.O.S. to the Central Irrigation Ministry asking for an assistance of Rs. 1 crore 25 lakhs; and

(c) whether C.W.P.C. and Ganga Flood Commission have undertaken any investigation of the problem of erosion in this region on expert basis?

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER, IN THE
MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION AND
POWER (SHRI BALGOVIND VERMA):**
(a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c). Government's attention has been invited to the reported statement made by Shri Ghani Choudhury, Minister for Irrigation and Waterways, West Bengal and published in the Calcutta papers on 28th January 1973. It is not correct to say that the Central Government and the Farakka Barrage authorities are neglecting the problem of erosion of Ganga in Murshidabad District down-stream of Farakka Barrage. Erosion of Ganga has been in existence for a number of years, even as far back as 1949, long before the construction of the Farakka Barrage Project was undertaken. In 1969 I inspected the erosion at Aurangabad and I suggested remedial measures to be undertaken. Subsequent to that, some protective works were carried out. Also the problem has been examined in great detail by the experts of the Central Water and Power Commission, Central Water and Power Research Station, Poona and the River Research Institute, West Bengal, in December 1971 and suggestions made for the construction of spurs and permeable spurs.

The Technical Advisory Committee of the Farakka Barrage Project also inspected the site in October 1972 and suggested that the type of protection works to be carried out should be finalised by the Chief Engineer, Irrigation and Waterways, West Bengal after discussion with the Director, Poona Research Station. The Chairman, Ganga Flood Control Commission also inspected the site in November 1972. Estimates for the protection works to be carried out have not been prepared and are awaited from the State Government.

The State Government has been requested to expedite the preparation of cost estimates. The West Bengal Government has made a request for Rs. one crore and twenty-five lakhs about three weeks back.

SHRI TRIDIB CHAUDHURI: The erosion of the right bank of Ganga downstream Farakka Barrage is a question of life and death for the people of a whole sub-division in the district of Murshidabad. Only yesterday a former General Manager of Farakka Barrage, Mr. Debesh Mukherjee has expressed the opinion that this erosion threatens the present alignment of the BAK loopline, National Highway No. 34 and also the proposed Jangipur Barrage. Three big towns Dhulian, Aurangabad and Jangipur are threatened with being completely wiped out. Because of all these things, very recently on the 3rd February an experts' meeting was held at the instance of the Chief Minister of West Bengal in Farakka itself and they have opined that about Rs. 62 crores would be necessary to stop this erosion. But we have been finding for sometime past there is a competition in passing the buck between the Central Government and the State Government of West Bengal. The Chief Minister and the Irrigation Minister of West Bengal have been saying that they have asked for necessary funds from the Centre and the Centre is unwilling to grant any money on this account. In the statement it is said:

"Estimates for the protection works to be carried out have not been prepared and are awaited from the State Government."

May I know on what basis the West Bengal Government has made a request for Rs. 125 crores for this purpose and why so far there has been no response from the Central Government with regard to this request? May I know whether any proper cost estimates have been received from the West Bengal Government or not and if they have been received, why they have not been considered and no response has come from the centre?

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (DR. K. L. RAO): The Farakka Barrage has nothing to do with this erosion that is taking place in the right bank of the Ganga. This erosion has been taking place since 1949 and the Railway lines were shifted in 1960 whereas construction of Farakka Barrage started only in 1964. I agree this is a very den-

sely populated area and it should be our endeavour to protect this area as far as possible. I had been there in 1969 and I gave some instructions for the protection of this area. Some work was done then and the work has to be further extended. Erosion is the characteristic of a river and many erosions have taken place. Below the Mokameh bridge there has been very severe erosion. The general policy is, all these erosion works are to be financed by the State Government. In this case also, I suggested to the Chief Minister, "Please prepare the estimates and start the work. If any additional assistance is required, it will be considered by the Government of India." So far no estimate has been prepared. Without the estimates, what is the use of saying, give so much money? The estimate must be prepared first. We have sent all the technical assistance. They have gone, discussed the matter and given instructions for the preparation of the estimate. When the estimate is prepared, if the State Government is not able to meet it from its own finances, then it will be sent to the Planning Commission and it is for them to consider what assistance can be given. Without any estimate, how can funds be sanctioned?

SHRI TRIDIB CHAUDHURI: The hon. Minister has misunderstood my question. It is not the purpose of my question to ascribe erosion due to Farakka Barrage. My main purpose is to elicit information from the Central Government whether they will be prepared to bear the financial burden of at least a part of protective works that would be needed to stop this erosion and whether any decision has been taken in this regard. With regard to that, he has said that he has not received any estimate from the West Bengal Government. The Farakka Barrage is one of Central undertakings, like, the Railway, the National Highways, and because one part of the Farakka Barrage project is threatened with erosion, why should not the Farakka Barrage Project itself and the Central Government also bear a part of the cost of protective works that would be required? May I know whether any estimates has been prepared by the Central

Government so far as the Central part of it is concerned?

DR. K. L. RAO: None of the part of the Farakka Barrage project is threatened. The State has to prepare an estimate and send it on to us. If the State is not able to find finances from its own sources, the Planning Commission will naturally consider and give assistance.

SHRI SAKTI KUMAR SARKAR: In view of the reply given by the hon. Minister, may I know whether it is a fact that this sort of danger was apprehended by Mr R. B Chakravartty and Mr. Daves Mukerjee, ex Chief Engineers and was pointed out to Dr. K. I. Rao and he ignored it. If so, may not the West Bengal Government claim that the entire cost of stopping erosion should be borne by the Central Government? It is the responsibility of the Central Government entirely.

DR. K. L. RAO: The erosion is not due to the Farakka Barrage at all. There is a technical advisory committee headed by Mr. Mitra. They are of the opinion that this has nothing to do with the Farakka Barrage.

SHRIMATI MAYA RAY: The hon. Minister made a trip to West Bengal in 1969. May I invite him to make another trip to West Bengal to see the situation for himself and have a detailed discussion with the authorities concerned on the whole of the Farakka Barrage.

MR. SPEAKER: That is a suggestion for action.

DR. K. L. RAO: As I said in the very beginning, this area is a highly densely populated area. It needs to be protected. I accept it myself.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: Although the hon. Minister has said that this erosion

has no connection with the Farakka Barrage project, may I know whether there is a probability that the linking of Ganga with Padma may threaten the Farakka Barrage? He has said that West Bengal Government has made a request for Rs. 125 crores, about three weeks back. Is it an *ad hoc* request or based on an estimate?

DR. K. L. RAO: It is an *ad hoc* request.

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the unscientific and incorrect decision taken in 1963 by Dr. K. I. Rao himself, ignoring the correct design and opinion of the high powered Technical Advisory Committee and expert engineers of the Farakka Barrage Project, including two former Chief Engineers one of them was Mr. R. B Chakravartty who resigned on account of differences with Dr. K. L. Rao— of the Farakka Barrage Project is responsible for the virulent erosion in Murshidabad and Malda districts, and whether the Irrigation Minister is going to rectify the error and sanction Rs. 2 crores for rivetment-cum-rectification scheme to prevent the virulent erosion, and if not, he should quit.

DR. K. L. RAO: I have emphatically said that the erosion has nothing to do with the Farakka Barrage at all. Nothing was done against the advice of the Technical Advisory Committee. At every stage the Technical Advisory Committee was consulted and everything was done according to the advice given by the Committee. This erosion, as I have submitted already, started in 1949 in that area. The construction of the barrage was in 1964. The erosion that has taken place has nothing to do with the Farakka Barrage at all.

MR. SPEAKER: The Question Hour is over.