

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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LOK SABHA

Tuesday, February 25, 1975/Phalguna
6, 1896 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Release of Funds to Metropolitan Transport Project of Calcutta

*103. SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE:
Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be
pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has not
released Rs. 30 crores to Metropolitan
Transport Project of Calcutta for allot-
ment of work in sections 11 and 12
covering of underground railway, and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI
BUTA SINGH): (a) and (b). A state-
ment is laid on the table of the House.

Statement

(a) The annual allotment of funds to
the Project has been made to cover
all the commitments of the year. The
contract for section 11 was awarded at
a cost of Rs. 343 lakhs in May 1974.
But the work could not be commenced
as the necessary technical collaboration
agreement proposed by Contractor with
a foreign firm is yet to be submitted
with Government approval. Tender
for contract section 12 costing approxi-
mately Rs. 650 lakhs is yet to be
awarded also.

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(b) Due to difficulty in meeting the
foreign exchange requirement and due
to the cost of the project having gone
up to about Rs. 250 crores, a fresh look
is being taken at the project by the
Government. After the project has
been finally cleared for fresh commit-
ments, the consideration of the above
two cases will be taken up.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: From
the statement it appears that the main
question has not been properly an-
swered. My question was 'whether his
Ministry has not released Rs. 30 crores
to Metropolitan Transport Project of
Calcutta for allotment of work in
sections 11 and 12 covering of under-
ground railway', and some statement
has been given which speaks of 'the
annual allotment of funds' and all
that. I want to know from the hon.
Minister whether the Metropolitan
Transport Project authorities approach-
ed the Central Government for the
release of Rs. 30 crores to cover the
expenses of sections 11 and 12, whether
they approached the Central Govern-
ment or not for these Rs. 30 crores
and if so, when they approached and
what was the reply to that.

SHRI BUTA SINGH: As it is quite
apparent from the statement laid on
the Table of the House, the tender for
Section 11 at a cost of Rs. 343 lakhs
was awarded in May 1974, but the
work could not be commenced as the
necessary technical collaboration agree-
ment proposed by the contractor has
not been finalised as yet.

Similarly, the award for section 12
costing Rs. 650 lakhs is yet to be
awarded to the contractor.

I do not know wherefrom the hon.
Member has picked up the question of
allotment of Rs. 30 crores. Whatever

funds were earmarked for annual allotment, that has been already done.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: My question is whether the authority of the Metropolitan Transport Project approached the Central Government with a proposal of Rs. 30 crores and whether the Minister is aware of that or not.

SHRI BUTA SINGH: No such proposal has come to us.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: I want to know how much time will be necessary to get these necessary sanctions for foreign exchange and other things, because in Calcutta, they have dug out the streets and the traffic is diverted and everything is chaotic as regards the traffic. So, how long are they to wait? The newspaper reports say that for more than 18 months this condition is going on. So, we want some assurance from the Minister as to how long it will take to give the necessary sanctions.

SHRI BUTA SINGH: The whole project was under the active consideration of the Government. The matter was taken up with the Cabinet very recently and we hope with all the required things, viz., the technical know-how, the foreign exchange and the clearance by the foreign collaborators, etc., coming, we will be able to complete this project not before 1981.

MR. SPEAKER: You should not open the earth unless the sanctions are given for, it will be very inconvenient for the people.

DR. RANEN SEN: In the statement, the Minister has stated:

"But the work could not be commenced as the necessary technical collaboration agreement proposed by Contractor with a foreign firm is yet to be submitted with Government approval."

May I know, as you have very rightly observed, whether after the streets are

dug out where, the technical collaboration agreement or the proposal was made?

May I also know whether it is a fact that the main foreign firm which is collaborating in this Metropolitan Transport Project is a certain organization in the USSR? If so, may I know whether the technical collaboration with the USSR in regard to the setting up of the Metropolitan Transport Project is yet to be finalised or whether it has been finalised already and a new agreement has to be arrived at with any other party and if so, who are they?

SHRI BUTA SINGH: The question which has been read out by the hon. Member relates to Section 11 which is purely of a consultancy nature and where no work has commenced yet. I do not know if he wants me to answer the entire question of our collaboration with the USSR whereas this particular collaboration which he has mentioned is with West Germany. So, this contractor has to obtain the technical consultancy collaboration from a West German firm which is now awaiting the formal approval of the Government of India. There is nothing in the way of the USSR collaboration as such.

DR. RANEN SEN: It is a misleading answer. It is known to everybody and also in the statement it has been made clear that the total collaboration is going to be with the USSR. Therefore, my question is: if there is a separate collaboration agreement, is it sanctioned or is it in consultation with the USSR Government or not, so that there is no difficulty for the MTP?

SHRI BUTA SINGH: Just as I mentioned, the entire project is in collaboration with the USSR. Only this part which the hon. Member has mentioned is with a West German firm.

MR. SPEAKER: His question was categorical. When the original collaboration was with USSR, if the

second collaboration was followed up in consultation with USSR. That was his question.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI): There is no such thing as collaboration with USSR in the technical sense. We are getting all the equipments from USSR. Technical know-how has been got earlier. What we are getting today is the equipments from the USSR. But on the contracts which we have already given to certain parties they have asked for foreign collaboration.

SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY: In Part (b) of the statement it has been stated that due to difficulty in meeting the foreign exchange requirements and due to the cost of the project having gone up to about Rs. 250 crores, a fresh look is being taken at the project by the Government. I would like to know from the Minister whether it is the intention of the Minister of Railways to delay the whole project on the plea that the cost of the project is going up and up or alternatively they have anything in mind to expedite the process; if that be so, what are the details about it, how they would like to expedite the whole process? What is the Government of India going to do in the matter? This word 'fresh look' has created certain suspicions and doubts in our mind.

SHRI BUTA SINGH: Fresh look does not mean reconsideration; but all these things are for expediting the project. And we are making all our efforts to see that the same resources are made available and this is done as expeditiously as possible.

SHRI SHANKERRAO SAVANT: In view of the economic stringency in the country and in view of the fact that several backward areas are going without railways, whether the whole question of underground railways not only in Calcutta, but everywhere will be reconsidered?

MR. SPEAKER: It is not a relevant question.

SHRI BUTA SINGH: Looking to the...

MR. SPEAKER: You are so impatient. I said, it is not relevant. Shri Indrajit Gupta.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Sir, I understood the Minister to say just now that all the equipments required for the project is being obtained from USSR. Recently there have been a number of press reports which have gone uncontradicted that the USSR is not in a position or not willing to supply as much of the equipments as they had indicated in the beginning which they could not supply because of some difficulties. Therefore I would like to know categorically from the Minister or whether there is any truth in these press reports and if it is not true why they are not being officially contradicted.

SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI: These press-reports are not correct. In fact as recently as in June 1974 the USSR team came to Delhi and we had discussions with them and we will be getting all the equipments from the USSR as had been offered.

MR. SPEAKER: It was not contradicted; his question was right.

SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI: Possibly because those press reports come every day. Since it has been brought to our notice, I am contradicting it here.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD: The greatest forum is the Parliament.

Proposal for Manufacture of Doxycycline by I.D.P.L.

*104. DR. RANEN SEN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the I.D.P.L. has proposed to manufacture doxycycline;