

personally send it when its action plan comes so that you can yourself see the field in which the Ayurved is used.

[English]

Independent Chartering of PSUs

*204. SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have decided to make it mandatory for all public sector undertakings to route their cargo through centralised chartering in the Ministry of Surface Transport;

(b) whether this decision has been taken to settle the stand off between his Ministry and other Ministries and PSUs;

(c) whether PSUs were demanding independent chartering rights to streamline their operations;

(d) the extent to which this decision is likely to be cost effective and ensure judicious use of foreign exchange; and

(e) the other terms and conditions fixed for Ministeries and PSUs under this decision?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir, The Government policy of importing on FOB/FAS and exporting on C & F/CIF basis with centralised shipping arrangements through Chartering Wing of M/o Surface Transport has been in existence since 1958 and was recently reviewed and re-affirmed.

(c) Some of the PSUs were demanding import on C & F/CIF and export on FOB/FAS basis.

(d) This policy helps in utilisation of Indian vessels to the maximum extent possible, thus saving foreign exchange to that extent and strengthening of national merchant fleet, chartering of foreign vessels at most competitive rates resulting in saving of foreign exchange, ensuring timely arrivals and to make shipping arrangements to suit indenter's requirements.

(e) The other terms and conditions of the decision are as under :

- (i) Prior permission is required to be obtained from Ministry of Surface Transport on a case to case basis in case of any departure from the above policy. However, Ministry of Surface Transport shall ensure disposal of such requests within four working days on

receipt of the complete within four working days on receipt of the complete information/request from the concerned Ministry/PSU.

(ii) Ministry of Surface Transport, Chartering Wing to ensure full utilisation of suitable Indian vessels in case they are able to meet the indenter's requirements at competitive rates and are able to maintain the time schedule.

(iii) In case of import of bulk quantities like fertilisers, coal, foodgrains etc. where freight element is substantial, a representative from Ministry of Surface Transport may be invited to participate in the discussions for advising on the shipping aspects of import/export contracts.

(iv) Ministry of Surface Transport should make all out efforts to finalise vessels, Indian or foreign, at the most competitive rates and before fixing the Vessels, prior approval of the indenting department/PSU should be obtained.

(v) In order to make imports and exports cost-effective and for judicious use of foreign exchange, Ministries/Departments should ensure imports on FOB/FAS and exports on CIF basis failing which necessary. No Objection Certificate (NOC) should be obtained from Ministry of Surface Transport (Chartering Wing) while applying for release of necessary foreign exchange for the purpose of chartering foreign vessels and for making freight payment in foreign currency.

(vi) The tendering system to be followed by Ministries/Departments/PSUs will be standardised.

[Translation]

SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI : Several amendments have been made to the law enacted in 1958. This is causing difficulties to people. But there has been no intervention from your side. Why not, this would be informed.

[English]

SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN : Sir, the Government policy of importing on FOB/FAS and exporting on C & F/CIF basis with centralised shipping arrangements through Chartering Wing has been in existence since 1958. This policy was enunciated recently from February, 1996 and it is being followed.

[Translation]

SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI : You have done it in 1996, however, thereafter there have been drastic changes. Have you made any new policy in the

changed circumstances as people are facing a lot of difficulties. People have submitted numerous representations. But still you have not taken any decision. Please let us know your programme in this regard.

[English]

SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN : The information furnished by the hon. Member is not correct.

In December, 1996 a decision was taken to import 1.4 MT from Australia. The hon. Member will be happy to know that about 67 have been finalised. They have been taken over by the Indian vessels. So, there is a saving of Rs. 20 million on account of freight. This system is working quite all right. So, there need not be any review or change of this system.

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask a specific question to the hon. Minister. The hon. Minister, in his reply, has stated :

"The Ministry will ensure disposal of such requests within four workings days on receipt of the complete information/request from the concerned Ministry/PSU."

If that is so, I want to know whether any format has been prepared. What do you mean by "all information"? It means, they have to send all the information immediately. Then, a letter will go. After four days or ten days or even one month, you will ask for some other information. Therefore, I want to know whether any format is there so that while applying they can fully fill up that format and then the Government can take a decision.

Those vessels are chartered vessels. They are other than the flag ships. I want to know whether the Government has made any comparative study by which they can indicate the number of Indian flag ships used, to what extent they were used, and when they were used. Which were the flag ships used during that period?

SHTI T.G. VENKATRAMAN : Previously, we used to give four days' time. Now, to avoid all these delays, within four days, the Ministry passes on the information to the concerned people.

Indo-Russian Nuclear Deal

+

*205. SHRI RAGHUNANDAN LAL BHATIA :
SHRI G.A. CHARAN REDDY :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any discussion took place with regard to sale of two nuclear reactor/weapons to India during the recent visit of External Affairs Minister to Russia;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Union Government have examined the Press Reports that US puts pressure on Russia on Indo-Russian Nuclear deal;

(d) whether Russia was to supply two nuclear reactors to India under the earlier Agreement;

(e) whether this subject was discussed between the Russian Prime Minister and the US authorities during the former's visit to United States;

(f) if so, whether there is any change in the attitude of Russia on this deal after the US visit of the Russian Prime Minister; and

(g) if so, by what time the deal is likely to be finalised?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) to (g) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Indo-Russian cooperation on setting up a nuclear power station in India was referred to by the Russian side during the visit of the Minister of External Affairs to the Russian Federation from 9-13 February, 1997.

Government have seen reports in the media indicating that the US has exerted pressure on Russia as regards the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project.

An Agreement was signed on 20 November, 1988 between India and the erstwhile USSR on "Cooperation in the construction of a Nuclear Power Station in India". By it the USSR was to cooperate in the construction and operation of a 2x1000 MW Nuclear Power Station in India.

Government does not have any information from either the Russian or US sides as to whether this subject was discussed during the visit of the Russian Prime Minister to the USA in February, 1997.

There has been no change in the Russian attitude towards the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project following the conclusion of the visit to the USA by the Russian Prime Minister.

Negotiations between India and Russia on the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project are yet to be completed.

SHRI RAGHUNANDAN LAL BHATIA : Sir, in the Statement, it is mentioned :

"An Agreement was signed on 20 November, 1988 between India and the erstwhile USSR on "Cooperation in the construction of a Nuclear Power Station in India". By it the USSR was to cooperate in the construction and operation of a 2x1000 MW Nuclear Power Station in India."

Now, we are in the year 1997.