

Title : Shri Ananth Kumar called the attention of the Minister of Water Resources to the need to expedite approval of Kalasa and Banduri nala projects, tributaries to river Mahadayi, in Karnataka in order to solve the acute drinking water problem in the State.

1254 hrs

(ii) Need to expedite approval of Kalasa and Banduri Nala projects

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR (BANGALORE SOUTH): I call the attention of the Minister of Water Resources to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:

"Need to expedite the approval of Kalasa and Banduri Nala projects, tributaries to river Mahadayi, in Karnataka in order to solve the acute drinking water problem in the State."

MR. SPEAKER: Silence please. Those who want to go out, may go out silently please. This is an important matter which is being discussed now.

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): Sir, the Government of Karnataka in April, 2002 requested Union Government for clearance of their proposal from inter-State angle for diversion of 7.56 TMC of water from Mahadayi basin to Malprabha basin through implementation of Kalasa and Banduri Nala schemes to meet the drinking water needs of Hubli/Dharwad cities.

The Ministry of Water Resources gave 'in-principle' clearance to the proposal to meet the drinking water need of Hubli/Dharwad, from water availability angle, on 30th April, 2002. The Government of Goa in July, 2002 took strong exception to the grant of this clearance by the Ministry and requested for setting up of an Inter-State Water Disputes Tribunal under the Inter-State Water Disputes Act, 1956 for resolution of the dispute. In view of this, the 'in-principle' clearance granted by the Ministry was placed 'in abeyance' in September, 2002 with a view to resolve the matter by an agreement between the two States, failing which, by an Award of the Tribunal. The Chief Minister of Goa in June, 2003 in his letter addressed to the hon. Prime Minister has expressed the desire of his State

*Also placed in Library, See No. LT 2639/05.

to settle the long-standing issue with Karnataka through negotiation. The two States have so far not concluded any agreement on the sharing of Mahadayi Water. Since 2004 till date Members of Parliament from Karnataka, hon. Chief Minister Mr. Dharam Singh and Irrigation Minister Mr. Mallikarjuna Kharge have called and met me on three occasions to resolve the issue including the mover of the Calling Attention motion.

The Ministry of Water Resources has been making efforts towards a negotiated settlement of Mahadayi water dispute and a meeting in this regard was convened by my predecessor during December, 2002. Also my Ministry had earlier proposed to convene the meetings of Chief Secretaries of the basin States of Mahadayi basin in the first week of January and the second week of February, 2005 which could not be held due to non-availability of Chief Secretary of Government of Goa. The Government of Goa later informed that the stand of Government of Goa with regard to finding out a negotiated settlement or going for a Tribunal may be known once the elected Government in Goa is in place again. After installation of popular Government in Goa, the Secretary, Water Resources has written a letter to the Chief Secretary, Goa on 20.6.2005 for seeking her convenience for holding a joint meeting with basin States of Mahadayi basin. Response from the Government of Goa is awaited. In the meantime, I had also proposed a meeting of Secretary, Water Resources, Government of Goa and Karnataka on 9.8.2005 at New Delhi on the above issue followed by my final intervention for a negotiated settlement, if possible, between the Chief Minister by first week of September, 2005. However, the meeting could not take place on 9.8.2005 due to non-availability of the officials of Government of Goa due to ongoing Assembly Session in Goa.

However, I have spoken to hon. Chief Minister of Goa on phone and he was kind enough to have agreed to have a meeting on the issue with the Government of Karnataka at my behest in mid-September, 2005. The exact date will be fixed in consultation with both the State Governments.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Ananth Kumar.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : Thank you, Sir. Mahadayi is one of the important rivers which emanates from Karnataka State in Khanapur Taluk and flows in Karnataka as well as Goa and ends up in the Arabian Sea. It flows 29 kilometres in Karnataka and 54 kilometres in Goa. There are many tributaries to this major river.

12.59 hrs (Mr. Deputy-Speaker *in the Chair*)

The two tributaries, Kalasa Nala and Banduri Nala, are important. According to Central Water Commission's 'Yield

Survey', the total yield of the basin is 190 TMC to 220 TMC. The share of Karnataka, according to 75 per cent of the dependability, is 45 TMC feet of water. The parts of North Karnataka – we have other cities of Karnataka, other than Bangalore, like Hubli, Dharwad, as well as various tehsils like Navalgund, Nargund, Badami and hundreds of villages – are starving due to drinking water crisis.

13.00 hrs

This drinking water crisis has been persisting for the last 20 years. The situation is so bad now that millions of people there get drinking water only once in 15 days and it is worse during summer. Therefore, in 1992, the Government of Karnataka and Government of Goa held discussions at the Chief Ministers' level, at ministerial level and also at the technical level. There was a proposal made by the Government of Karnataka for taking up two Nala diversion projects, one is Kalasa Nala diversion and another is Banduri Nala diversion, to divert 7.56 TMC ft. of water out of the yield of 45 TMC ft. of water of Karnataka to Malaprabha river so that the drinking water problem can be mitigated. But despite protracted negotiations, the sorry state of affairs continues even today.

Sir, I would like to briefly bring to the kind attention of this august House and the Government, through you, that meetings were held as early as in 1992, 1993 and 1996 to form a Technical Committee comprising of officers of both the States. Then NEERI of Nagpur was commissioned to have an environment impact assessment. NEERI, Nagpur gave a very clear report that there is no objection for taking up these Kalasa Nala and Banduri Nala diversion projects to divert 7.56 TMC ft. of water to Malaprabha river and later both the State Governments of Karnataka and Goa decided to pursue this report.

Sir, again meetings were held in 1998, 1999, 2000 and in 2002 there was an inter-State meeting held in New Delhi. In that meeting, the Chairman of the Central Water Commission expressed his regrets towards the attitude of the Government of Goa in bringing unnecessary objections because the Government of Goa, day in, day out, raised many objections. First they said that there should be an environment impact study. It was conducted by NEERI and it almost gave a green signal to these projects. Then they said that there should be a yield assessment study. The yield assessment study was conducted by the Central Water Commission and according to the yield assessment study, 45 TMC ft. of water was assured to Karnataka. Later, after the yield assessment study was done, the Government of Goa said that they require one more study to be conducted by the Meteorological Department. The Union Water Resources Ministry said that this study has already been conducted by the Central Water Commission while conducting the yield assessment study and if they want to conduct their own study, let them conduct it.

Sir, the Government of Goa has also been dilly-dallying as to whether they want a negotiated settlement or otherwise; umpteen number of times the Government of Goa said to the Union Water Resources Ministry and the Government of Karnataka that they want a negotiated settlement. During NDA's regime, on 30.4.2002, in-principle clearance was given by the Central Water Commission and the Ministry of Water Resources for these Kalasa Nala and Banduri Nala projects.

But later, because of the protests from the Government of Goa, in-principle clearance was kept in abeyance. Later, as already stated by the hon. Minister, many all-party delegations, including the delegations of hon. Members, met the Prime Minister and the Union Minister of Water Resources. They assured us that there would be a time bound negotiated settlement and that they would also look into withdrawing of abeyance order.

I want to bring a serious matter to the knowledge of this House. In the last 14 months, the CWC has called four meetings. The first meeting was called on 16th April 2004; the second was called on 20th August 2004; the third meeting was called on 7th January 2005; and the fourth meeting was called on 15th February 2005. In these four meetings, they expected the representatives of Government of Karnataka and Government of Goa to have a negotiated settlement on this issue.

But, unfortunately, when such meetings have been called, on the direction of the hon. Minister of Water Resources, by none other than the Central Water Commission, all the four times, the Government of Goa had expressed inability to participate in these meetings. That has created a great amount of heart burning.

Sir, I want to bring to the kind attention of this House that for the last few months, all the legislators, all the hon. Members from Karnataka and thousands of farmers have been continuously waging an agitation in the towns of Navalgund and surrounding areas, including Hubli-Dharwad cities. The only contention is that the matter is pending for the last 20 years and the negotiations are going on from 1992 onwards. In 1992, the Government of Goa stated that they would pursue the NEERI report and continue with the project. Later on, they have also assured the Prime Minister and the hon. Minister of Water Resources that they wanted a negotiated settlement.

The total yield is 220 TMC feet. Out of the 220 TMC feet, the total yield of Karnataka State is 45 TMC feet. We are urging only for the diversion of 7.56 TMC feet of water and that too only for drinking purposes and not for irrigation purposes. Without this 7.56 TMC feet of water, the entire northern Karnataka area is reeling under severe drinking water crisis.

I urge upon the hon. Minister and the Government of India that they should immediately intervene in this matter. The hon. Minister has been kind enough in holding the meetings with the representatives of northern Karnataka, especially, the hon. Members of that area and the Government of Karnataka. But somehow, it is a story of protraction. I do not know why the Government of Goa is not cooperating.

The hon. Minister is in a very vantage position, the UPA is governing at the Centre and the constituent of UPA is governing in Goa, when the Union Government in principle has already agreed for this diversion and the Government of Goa is also ready for a negotiated settlement.

In other areas, that is, between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, pending the final decision of the Tribunal, water is already flowing to Tamil Nadu for irrigation purposes. But this is a matter of water for drinking purposes. Therefore, I urge upon the Government and the hon. Minister to prevail upon the State Government of Goa and revoke the abeyance order for going ahead with these two major diversion projects.

It should be done in a time-bound manner. The next summer is approaching. He has assured the House through his statement that he has already had a telephonic talk, and in September we may have good news. But, I urge the hon. Minister that it has to be time bound. By the end of the September, if 'in-principle' clearance is allowed and the abeyance order is revoked, Karnataka will be benefited; justice will be done; the drinking water crisis will be mitigated; and the long-pending demands and the ongoing agitation will come to a conclusion.

SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI : Thank you, Sir. The hon. Minister in his statement has rightly quoted that many a times the meetings of the officials of the Governments of Goa and Karnataka have been called. I am not complaining against any Government. Whenever we have met, he was kind enough; he has told that we are persuading with the Government of Karnataka. Most of the points have already been covered by my senior colleague Shri Ananth Kumar. I do not want to repeat them. But this is the question of humanity. In the surrounding area of Hubli-Dharwar – even Karnataka Government has stated in its Memorandum but the Minister has stated only Hubli-Dharwar – almost 100 villages are suffering from acute drinking water shortage. I am not talking about the irrigation projects. Karnataka is a law-abiding State. Many other States are there. I do not want to quote.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Joshi, you are requested to ask only questions and not to make a speech.

SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI : Sir, I will take only two or three minutes. I am not repeating the points.

We are law-abiding people. Many other States are commencing works without even giving a formal information to the Central Government, to the Central Water Commission. Catchment area of 375 square kilometres is there in Karnataka while Goa covers the catchment area of 1500 square kilometres. Our share has already been quoted; it is 45 TMC. The question is this. In the National Water Policy also – it may not be approved – which has been referred in one of the cases of the Supreme Court, that is in Delhi drinking water case itself where Haryana State was involved, it has been mentioned that drinking water is a topmost priority.

People get water once in 10 or 15 days. Even a pot of water is sold at 25 paise or 50 paise. This is the situation. The hon. Finance Minister is also present here. He quoted about the water problem in Chennai, and said that some major fund is allocated. We are not asking for any fund. We have water. Karnataka Government is ready to invest. The demand is there for 20 or 30 years. We are asking only for 7.56 TMC of water. As per the National Water Policy, kindly allow us and withdraw the abeyance order.

Secondly, in all the five meetings, including the latest one, all the time the Government of Goa is abstaining itself. One time they talked about the share of water; another time they talked about the environmental problem. When environmental problem was talked, NEERI was appointed. NEERI gave the clearance. Then, they talked about oceanology. When the share of water, yield of water was questioned, CWC was appointed. Then, they talked about the IMD.

Where is it going to end? I am not exaggerating it and you can get the information through your own sources. For the last one year, people are getting drinking water once in 15 days. How long will this attitude go on?

Secondly, the dam has been built and the pipelines are laid. As there is no water in the dam, the investment is going waste. I urge upon the Central Government and the Water Resources Ministry to take up this issue very seriously with the Goa Government and convince them or you withdraw the abeyance order. People are agitating. The National Water Policy and CWC yield assessment are entirely in favour of Karnataka. Kindly withdraw the

abeyance order, as per the National Water Policy. That is the only request that I am making to the Government.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Sir, this matter has been brought to our notice for the last so many years. I do not like to go into those details.

The distinguished hon. Member, Shri Ananth Kumar has stated all those things. This matter had been debated between Karantaka and Goa from various angles before CWC gave the 'in-principle' clearance. When the Planning Commission appointed a Sub-Group to discuss the yield assessment in 1982, the Goa Government stood by it. While the yield assessment made in 1982 was one type of a measure by the Planning Commission, the latest assessment of CWC in 1999 was far more superior to that. They were arguing in the initial stage that they had a doubt as to which was right and which was wrong. Again we addressed this issue. The Goa Government and CWC together evaluated and assessed the whole matter and planned accordingly. Unfortunately, their co-operation, which we sought, in the participation exercise of CWC was not there. Naturally, CWC, on its own, again tried to evaluate the whole assessment issue and provided the raw data to them. They even questioned the raw data and said, "This is not correct. We have to process and clarify." Finally, they banked on the data of the Panjim side. We also provided that very recently and now they conveyed that they are examining it.

The matter, who is right and who is wrong is not important. In a matter of water sharing, be it for drinking purpose or for irrigation, no State accepts that their State is a surplus State, and every State agrees to the remark that their State is a deficit State.

The Parliament provided us the strength to deal this issue under the Inter State Water Tribunal mechanism. I agree that the issue of drinking water, where people are crying for years together, cannot be delayed for so long by going through the process of Tribunal. According to the law of the land, which is accepted by the Parliament, Tribunal is the only mechanism to resolve such issues. But we always feel and believe that through the negotiated arrangement between the States on technical judgment, things can proceed better and we can understand this.

I have studied this issue in depth. I found that the observation of the Planning Commission's Sub-Group in 1982 had undergone sea change because there is a substantial change in the average rain water deposit in the catchment area for the last 15 years. Therefore, according to me, the plea that the Goa Government took in the initial stage regarding the 1982 assessment, questioning the 1999 assessment does not stand on merit, according to me.

The second point is that in those negotiations, I do not like to bring the name of NDA or UPA. Unfortunately, Shri Ananth Kumar took the name. It is not correct because on water issue I do not like to bring in politics. Even when the NDA Government gave the 'in-principle' clearance, the NDA Chief Minister of Goa vehemently questioned it and opposed it.

So, let us not discuss NDA and UPA. Let us discuss the thirsty people of Hubli, Dharwad and its adjoining villages. They genuinely need drinking water from the reservoir which was built. They need, from two schemes, Kalsa and Bandurinalla, 7.56 TMC of water, and the water, which is substantially large, which is flowing in the larger catchment area in Goa, is going to the sea. Now, from the water which is going to the sea, if a State says, 'give us something to drink,' and there to find the logic or illogic of that request is logically, politically and socially very unfortunate after so many years of freedom. But the Union Government is not competent to decide and tell them you do it or you do not do it because water is listed as a State subject. With all our best possible arrangements, we are only a facilitator and a mediator between the States.

I can only tell the hon. Members, through you, Sir, that the hon. Chief Minister of Goa on the earlier occasion did withdraw his first warning on taking up this matter to the Tribunal by his letter to the hon. Prime Minister. At that stage, he wanted a negotiated settlement. The present Chief Minister's office had agreed to participate in our meeting. Well, there was some turmoil in the Goa Government. At that time, the Chief Secretary had even committed to attend the meeting. On the day of the meeting or before that day, he was shifted to Andaman for the Tsunami relief work. The new office, which took over, said, "Let the Government be settled and then we will join the talk because we cannot officially commit whether we will stick to the Tribunal or go in for the negotiation." I could appreciate that.

Finally, I had a long talk with the Chief Minister and I tried to convey him that the ecological impacts have been well studied by the most reputed organisation, NEERI. Since they are convinced that there is an ecological threat, what is wrong in it? Finally, the Chief Minister agreed to me and said: "Please do not take it otherwise. We are not defying the facilitation process of your Ministry. We will address the issue together in mid-September at New Delhi and try to find what solution could be arrived at." I can only add to it that I am not sitting silent. I have taken various efforts on this matter. The Chief Minister of Karnataka, Mr. Dharam Singh, Mr. Mallikarjuna Kharge and the hon. Members, Shri Prahlad Joshi and Shri Ananth Kumar have been, time and again, explaining the issue to me and apprising the matter to me. I am seized of this matter and also the recent protests and agitation. I am doing not a

one-to-one meeting with the Chief Minister. What I am doing in that meeting is that I am bringing the oceanography expert, their institution, NIO and I am also bringing NEERI. I am bringing all the possible experts available for the assessment quality report of the CWC in that meeting.

With a full-fledged presentation I am going to draw a definite action plan within September. You will understand and appreciate my difficulty that if the State Governments finally come to a conclusion that, no, we cannot agree with all these things; and we stick to the point of going to the Tribunal, it becomes difficult. But so far, as I understand, I will be able to prevail on both the Chief Ministers to come to a conclusion at least to rescue the people of Hubli and Dharwad cities from the acute drinking water crisis in this year itself, before 31st of December.

I also tell the hon. Member Mr. Ananth Kumar that he was also a Union Minister. If on the protest of a Chief Minister, the 'in-principle' clearance is kept in abeyance, unless I bring that Chief Minister to the logical conclusion, *suo motu* if I withdraw it, the very purpose of the meeting on that occasion in mid-September will be futile. Therefore, I request the hon. Member not to insist to me today to withdraw the abeyance order. It means they will go to the Tribunal. That will not solve the problem. What I said in reply to a time-bound question-answer was that the meeting would be held in September, and before 31st December, I will convey a definite positive message in this regard. I am confident that the Chief Minister of Goa, who is very sensitive on such issues, will understand the logical conclusion of the technical expert's evaluation. I hope we will find some positive solution in this regard in this year. Thank you.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : We are requesting you to prevail and persuade him.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: I shall not only persuade but I will also try to see that a logical conclusion is arrived at.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, we will take up 'matters of urgent public importance'. First, I will request to Shri Prabhunath Singh.