

- (14) 67th Report (10th Lok Sabha) on Uneconomic purchase of engines for Shaktiman vehicles.

12.03½ hrs.

COMMITTEE ON SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION

First and Second Report

[Translation]

SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA (Outer-Delhi) : Sir, I beg to present the first and second reports (Hindi and English versions) of the Committee on Subordinate Legislation.

12.04 hrs.

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

Signing of Ganga Water Treaty with Bangladesh

[English]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA): Hon. Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to make a statement with regard to the sharing of Ganga waters between Bangladesh and our country.

Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh paid an official visit to India from December 10 to 12, 1996 at my invitation. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had meetings with our President, Vice-President, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, Leader to the Opposition in Parliament. She held detailed talks with me. She also met leaders of political parties. These talks were held in a most warm and friendly atmosphere. The Bangladesh Prime Minister also paid a visit to Ajmer and Jaipur during her stay in India.

This was the first visit of the Bangladesh Prime Minister to India since she assumed office in June this year. The visit however comes as the culmination of series of exchanges initiated shortly after our Government took office. Earlier the External Affairs Minister had visited Dhaka in September, and we had received the Bangladesh Foreign Minister in November. This period of intense interaction has placed our relations on an entirely new footing. Progress is being made on all issues in our bilateral relations. The prominent issue in our bilateral ties, over the last two decades has been the issue of sharing of Ganga waters at Farakka. I am honoured to state that I and the Bangladesh Prime Minister have today signed a new Treaty on the sharing of the Ganga waters. We are

confident this Treaty would be a landmark in our bilateral relations. The Treaty protects the interests of India and at the same time helps Bangladesh by providing a share of the Ganga waters to that country.

[Translation]

KUMARI UMA BHARATI (Khajuraho) : More water has been given...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA : I shall lay a copy of the text of the Treaty with its Annexures on the Table of the House. According to the Treaty, the sharing of Ganga waters at Farakka between India and Bangladesh will be on the basis of a formula which is at Annexure I. The key merit of this formula is that it shares available waters on a basis which is fair and equitable. The formula also takes into account the basic requirements and minimum needs of both sides. Therefore, during the critical period within the lean season i.e., from March 1 to May 10, India and Bangladesh each shall receive a guaranteed flow of 35,000 cusecs of water in an alternating sequence of three 10-day periods each. This is aimed at meeting the fundamental requirements of both our countries through a just and reasonable sharing of the burden of shortage. The Treaty also has the merit of being a long term arrangement combined with scope for reviews at shorter intervals to study the impact of the sharing formula and to make needed adjustments. While the Treaty will be valid for 30 years and renewable on mutual consent, there is a provision of mandatory reviews at the end of 5 years and even earlier after two years with provisions for adjustments as required. Pending a fresh understanding after the review stage, Bangladesh would continue to receive 90 per cent of its share in accordance with the new formula. We would thus avoid a situation where there is no agreement on the sharing of the Ganga waters between India and Bangladesh.

The signing of the Treaty between India and Bangladesh is a fitting tribute to the special quality of our relations. Indo-Bangladesh cooperation is based on a history of shared sacrifices, sanctified with the blood of the martyrs who laid down their lives in 1971. It is entirely appropriate that this Treaty comes on the eve of the 25th anniversary of the liberation of Bangladesh which was a momentous landmark in the history of our continent. With the signing of this Treaty, we expect to usher in a new era in Indo-Bangladesh relations. This new relationship should be of immense benefit to India in the long term in all areas of bilateral relations including security, trade and other areas. With the removal of what has been a constant irritant in bilateral ties, we can look forward to an entirely new phase of cooperation. As the House would recall, we have already taken initiatives in the commercial sphere by extending tariff concessions to Bangladesh on a range of products of export interest to them. We propose

to extend commercial credits of Rs. 100 crore to enhance trade relations further. We are working together with Bangladesh to ensure appropriate development and security in our entire eastern region.

Sir, we also acknowledge on this occasion that in the past also it had been the endeavour of the successive Governments to strengthen our relations with Bangladesh.

It would be appropriate for me also at this stage to place on record our appreciation of the very constructive role played by the Chief Minister of West Bengal and his Cabinet colleagues in bringing about improved atmosphere in which the Treaty between India and Bangladesh has become possible. My thanks are also due to my colleagues in the Ministries of External Affairs, Water Resources and Surface Transport for their invaluable support in this endeavour.

Both India and Bangladesh cooperate very extensively in regional fora such as SAARC and it shall be our endeavour to take this cooperation forward so that a new and a more constructive framework of relationship can be built up in our sub-Continent to the mutual benefit of the people of all countries.

The visit of the Bangladesh Prime Minister is an event of historic significance. She herself has reaffirmed the spirit of 1971 in her speech at the banquet in her honour last night. We also recall those times when we worked shoulder to shoulder and we are resolved that in the future, the same spirit of brotherhood will guide us to a new era. I am sure the House would share these sentiments and would support our resolve to advance in this direction.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur) : I would like to congratulate the Prime Minister and also the Prime Minister of Bangladesh for a very constructive role they have played and for the treaty that has been entered into which will usher in, I am sure, a new era of friendship and cooperation between ourselves and our closest neighbour. This is an occasion which we should heartily welcome. I again congratulate the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister of Bangladesh ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Lucknow) : I am ready to vacate the place for him...*(Interruptions)*

The statement given by the hon'ble Prime Minister is very important and I would like to go through it deeply. Whatever steps are taken to improve Indo-Bangladesh relations I welcome those steps. Such steps should be taken with full strength. A new chapter has been added to the history of Bangladesh that democracy has been established there after 21 years. It seems that there has been all round change in Bangladesh. I remember the time when Bangbandhu Sheikh Mujiburrahman came

to Delhi to take the responsibility of independent Bangladesh and we had welcomed him at the conformation. Later on he was brutally assassinated. Sheikh Hasina had to face a lot of difficulties. When she has desired to extend her hand for friendship with India it is natural that India should reciprocate so that the interests of both the countries can be protected and a new dimension be given to the friendly relations and these relations should also be strengthened.

So far as the question of my reaction to the statement about sharing of Ganga water is concerned I can give my comments on it only after going through the statement. But when the discussion is going to take place on foreign policy perhaps in the evening today, I would like to suggest that the discussion on the price rise should also be completed today itself.

MR. SPEAKER : It would be completed today itself.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Foreign policy should not be taken in between. The discussion on foreign policy can be held later on and this can also be included in it as this matter relates to the foreign policy. The issue of price rise is not so important. All Members would be given an opportunity to express their points.

There are several aspects related to our relations with Bangladesh. Yesterday, when I met Sheikh Hasina, I asked her as to what would happen to the Chakma refugees, whether Bangladesh would like to accept their return. In reply to this she has given a positive response. All those points can not be mentioned now in the clarification but it can be mentioned during discussion. Mr. Speaker, Sir, if you defer the discussion on foreign policy, the issue of treaty can also be covered in it.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I think this is enough. We can discuss it later.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I cannot allow two-three Members from one party. Actually there is no rule for making comments on the *suo motu* statement. But this is a special case; that is why I am allowing it.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI (Howrah) : I heard with rapt attention the statement made by the hon. Prime Minister. The statement not only shall improve the relationship between India and Bangladesh, but it will also create a milestone in the history of our bilateral cooperation.

I remember in this House in 1971 what happened during the Bangladesh Revolution struggle. You may recall that I was one of the instruments in the liberation struggle right up to the Mujib Government. On 9th August 1971 when the Indo-Soviet Treaty was signed I know which party took what stand; I do not repeat that incident today. History will bear with us I only like to tell, through you Mr. Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister that we must ensure that we implement the Treaty that we enter into

to the full satisfaction of the spirit of the Treaty and also keeping in view the interest of the nation.

Now, the upper stream water which comes from U.P. flows through Bihar and goes finally into the catchment area of the Farakka Barrage. I would like to know whether that matter has been taken care of in totality to ensure...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : No more, Shri Dasmunsi.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Sir, if you do not allow me to speak, I will not speak. I will finish within one minute. Yesterday, the hon. Prime Minister of Bangladesh had also talked to me and Kumari Mamata Banerjee. We also told her how much pleasure we felt when we heard that she had gone back to Bangladesh. We must extend all our support to her. But if we cannot implement it, if we cannot ensure that the water is fully available in Bengal and Calcutta Port Trust - the upper stream is not in our hands, it is in the hands of U.P. and Bihar - then, we will lose our face both in the eyes of the people of Bangladesh and also in the eyes of the people of Bengal. The Prime Minister has to take care of that. If the Prime Minister does not take care of that, the Treaty itself will become counter-productive to us because China still has its eyes on the Chittagong Port. Therefore, I will request the hon. Prime Minister that the Treaty should be implemented, taking care of the total flow of the water from the upper stream. The role of the Governments of U.P. and Bihar are equally important as that of the Government of Bengal. That is my submission.

SHRI CHITTA BASU (Barasat) : Sir, we want to associate ourselves with it. This is an important issue. I associate myself with the colleagues of mine here in welcoming the Treaty which has been signed between the Government of India and the Government of Bangladesh.

While appreciating the initiative taken by the Government of India and the keenest possible desire on the part of the people of Bangladesh and the new Government of Bangladesh, I want to make a request to the Prime Minister and the Government of India that other bilateral issues which are persisting for ages together in improving bilateral relations between India and Bangladesh including the exchange of enclaves should be settled as early as possible. And that should be followed up immediately along with this Treaty.

Thank you...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA (Ponnani) : Sir, we welcome the Treaty and congratulate both the Governments.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha) : Sir, on behalf of my party, I support and endorse the views expressed by other Leaders. We congratulate the Prime Minister of India as well as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh for this venture...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : I think, the whole House congratulates both the Governments and welcomes this Treaty. I would myself like to join in that.

(Interruptions)

12.17 hrs.

[English]

MOTION RE: EIGHTH REPORT OF THE BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): Sir, I beg to move :

"That this House do agree with the Eighth Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 11th December, 1996."

MR. SPEAKER : Motion moved :

"That this House do agree with the Eighth Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 11th December, 1996."

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ (South-Delhi) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the four hour time has been allotted for the 81st Constitution Amendment Bill regarding reservation for woman, as shown in the items of the report of Business Advisory Committee presented by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs. But the day for bringing this Bill has not been fixed so far. I would like to remind you that on 9th when this report was presented in the House, I had asked you about the date of introduction of this Bill in the House. You said in this very House that this Bill would be introduced after two days i.e. the 12th which falls today itself. We were hopeful today that this Bill would be included in today's order paper for introduction but it has not been included in today's order paper.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this Bill has been subject to a lot of criticisms. Different types of views are being expressed through Doordarshan and newspapers about it. Though, you have fixed four hour time for the discussion on this Bill but whether this Government would be able to decide a certain date as to when this Bill has to be introduced as the present session of the Parliament is going to be adjourned in the next week and if only four hour discussion is to be held on it then the discussion should be held on 17th of this month otherwise the session will be over on 20th. All the parties will have to issue whip to its members for voting on it, as this is a Constitution Amendment Bill for which at least 50 percent Members must be present...*(Interruptions)*