

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Calling Attention. Mr. Bijoy Modak.

SHRI KANWAR LAL GUPTA (Delhi Sadar): Before you proceed, I want to make a submission. It is an important one. A Reporter of All-India Radio, who was covering the proceedings of this House, died yesterday because he was not properly attended to. He was a heart patient and...

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Gupta, I have called Mr. Bijoy Modak.

SHRI KANWAR LAL GUPTA: He was not attended at all. No oxygen was given....

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Bijoy Modak has the floor now. If you still persist, it will not go on record.

(Interruption)**

11-05 hrs

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

DAMAGE IN MALDA AND MURSHIDABAD DISTRICTS (WEST BENGAL) DUE TO FLOODS

SHRI BIJOY MODAK (Hooghly): I call the attention of the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation to the following matter of urgent public importance and request him to make a statement thereon:

"Reported loss and damage caused by the devastating flood of Ganga in the districts of Malda and Murshidabad (West Bengal), the threat to Farakka Barrage Project due to erosion of vast tract of land by the river Ganga and the protective, remedial and relief measures taken by Government."

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION: (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): The river Ganga had been in floods in its lower reaches during the third week of July and started rising again from the 27th July reaching the peak level of 24.42 metres at Farakka on the 20th of August which is 0.1 metre lower than the maximum level recorded in the year 1948. Thereafter from the 22nd August the water level started receding but it continues to be above the danger level. There have been spells of heavy rain-fall during August in Murshidabad and Malda districts on several occasions.

According to the reports received from the West Bengal Government all the major rivers in the two districts, viz., Ganga, Bhagirathi, Bhairab, Bansloi and Pagla started rising from 14th August inundating char areas and low lying villages in Jangipur, Shamsher Gunj, Berhampore Lalga, Raghunathgunge, Jalangi, Bhagawangola (II), and Pannagar blocks. Flood water also enter Dhulian town.

In Murshidabad district, parts of unprotected areas of Manikchak, Ratua I, and Kaliachak (III) blocks were also affected by floods. A total area of 750 sq. kms. with a population of over 4.5 lakh persons was affected. The old alignment of National Highway was under 65 meter deep water. The National Highway approach to Aurangabad town was cut off. 3,500 houses have either been damaged or destroyed. The crops in an area of 50,000 ha. have been affected. Death of one child has been reported. No loss of cattle is reported.

In Malda district, an area of 350 sq. kms. was affected in 5 blocks, viz., Maliachak (II and III), Manikchak, Ratua (I) and parts of Hariachandrapur (II), with a population of 1.5 lakhs. 2956 houses were either damaged or destroyed. Crops of over an area of 6400 hectares were affected. 6 human lives and 10 heads of cattle are reported to be lost.

Although the Ganga is known to erode its banks here and there almost throughout its course in alluvial plains, there has been no threat to any component of the Farakka Barrage Project due to erosion during the current monsoon.

In Malda district 22,000 persons have been rescued and given shelter in 21 camps. Necessary public health and sanitary measures were taken up by the State Government. Arrangements have also been made to supply fodder and take preventive measures against cattle epidemic. 400 metric tonnes of wheat has been allotted for distribution. Rs. 2 lakh have been sanctioned for the purchase of edibles and another Rs. 2 lakhs for relief contingencies; grams and milk powder have also been distributed as part of the relief operations.

In Murshidabad district Rs. 3 lakhs have been sanctioned for purchase of edibles and Rs. 5.5 lakhs for miscellaneous items. Garments like dhoties, sarees, etc., have also been distributed. In addition to milk powder, house building grants of Rs. 50,000 have also been

[Shri Surjit Singh Barnala]

sanctioned by the State Government. 18,000 metric tonnes of wheat has also been despatched to the district.

A Central Team is visiting the State from 1st to 3rd September, 1978, for on the spot assessment of the requirements of Advance Plan Assistance for meeting the situation arising out of floods. Suitable action will be taken on receipt of report of the Central Team.

5,000 tonnes of wheat has already been released by the Centre as an interim allocation in anticipation of the recommendations of the Central Team.

SHRIBHJOYMODAK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Farakka Barrage project is of national importance and of high engineering skill costing over Rs. 200 crores. The purpose of the scheme was to augment the flow of water from the Ganges to the Bhagirathi by taking the water from the upstream Ganges through the feeder canal, thereby increasing the navigability of the river Bhagirathi and saving the port of Calcutta.

At the initial stage, it roused great expectations. It was thought that it will be a great boon to the people of West Bengal. But subsequently it proved to be otherwise and all the expectations were belied. The required quantum of water could not flow from the Ganges into the Bhagirathi river, defeating the purpose for which the Barrage was built. Moreover, this scheme has become a scourge to the people of the twin districts of Murshidabad and Malda in West Bengal.

This year also, the due to erosion of the embankments of the Ganges, both in the upstream and in the downstream of the Barrage, these two districts have been affected and the vast tracts of land have been eroded and submerged under water.

It will be seen from the statement that the flood has affected many places, namely, Manikchak, Ratua, Kaliachak, Jangipur Lalgola, Raghunathgunge, Jalangi, Bhagawangola and other places stretching upto Berhampore. In the statement, he has admitted that a large number of people have been affected by the flood.

This has been a recurring phenomenon from the year 1971. This phenomenon began just after the construction of the Farakka Barrage. It is doubted that due to the faulty design of the Barrage, the erosion in the Ganges, both upstream and downstream, is caused. Many eminent engineers of West Bengal, such as, Mr. Debendra Mukerjee who was associated with the scheme, have opined that it is due to the faulty design of the Barrage that the

caused flooding of the district of Murshidabad. I would ask here whether this defect in the design of Farakka Barrage will be rectified and the Central Government will take up any model hydel research test of the Farakka Barrage design in the River Research Institute to see whether there is a defect and, if there is, to quickly remedy it. Due to this erosion both in the upstream and downstream of Farakka Barrage, a serious and dangerous situation has been caused. As you know, on the side of Murshidabad, downstream of Farakka, the distance between Padma i.e. Ganga and Bhagirathi was six miles before 6 years but now the distance has been eroded and it has come down to only a slender strip of land of 800 yards only. There is danger of the Padma coming closer to Bhagirathi and joining it. In that situation, as the feeder canal which stretches up to 40 miles before joining Bhagirathi and the whole stretch of this land is not protected, there is danger of the feeder canal, the Bhagirathi and the Ganges i.e. Padma joining up and a new channel of Ganges water up-stream of the Barrage passing south of the Barrage, to Padma via Bhagirathi.

On the other hand, this erosion business has also caused some havoc in the district of Malda. There is a canal on the northern side of upstream Ganges and, due to erosion, the upstream Ganges is showing signs of channelising its course. Through this to the downstream Ganges also, and from both sides, i.e. the north and the south of the Barrage, there is danger of the upstream Ganges joining the Padma, thereby making the Farakka Barrage a mere show-piece. It will be of no use then, and there will be a huge loss to the exchequer.

Therefore, I am coming to the point that this must be immediately looked into and the Government of India must take up its own responsibility for checking the erosion.

The Central Government, I think have taken some remedial measures and have constructed a canal just in Jangipore and also constructed afflux Bund near the canal in Murshidabad District where the Padma is rushing to the Bhagirathi. But there are six gaps in the Bund and, through the gaps, the Canal water of the Padma is rushing to Bhagirathi. So, the Central Government must take steps immediately for sealing and mending these.

My question is whether the Government has taken action regarding the hydel test of the Farakka Barrage scheme and what steps they are taking to remedy the erosion, and what relief measures are being taken by the Central Government, not depending on the West Bengal Govern-

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: So far as the Farakka Barrage is concerned, there is no faulty design and no faulty construction in that, and the Government has no proposal for any hydrel construction there, as has been suggested by my Hon. friend. It is also incorrect to say that it was soon after the construction of the Farakka Barrage that erosion downstream had started. In fact, it has been going on for a very long time and, for that very reason, it was necessitated that the railway-line on the west bank of the Ganga was to be shifted.

Regarding the point raised by the Hon. Member that the Ganga is shifting towards the canal itself, this matter was referred to a Technical Advisory Committee of the project, who went into the matter. They have recommended the construction of four spurs in this reach, which will be taken up shortly.

So, there is no danger to the canal as such. We are taking all precautionary measures to see that there is no danger to the canal.

SHRI BUOY MODAK: What about erosion?

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: Regarding erosion, I have mentioned already that the West Bengal Government had made a proposal. That proposal was made in 1973 and the estimated cost was Rs. 63 crores. The scheme was not based on technical field investigation and was not backed by requisite model experiments, which was very essential. This was then referred to GWPBS by the State Government, but the necessary field data required by them was not provided. The Minister of Irrigation of West Bengal visited the GWPBS station in July this year and he was also apprised of the position that the required data has not been furnished. He agreed that the required data should be furnished and that necessary steps should be taken.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYA (Serampore): My first point is that, apart from this erosion, this House has discussed floods in other places also. So, my question to the Minister would be, whether the Government has any national plan to get rid of the erosion of rivers, causing floods in many places. My first point is whether you have any plan or not and whether you are going to consider making a national plan. You are spending crores and crores of money on flood relief, but what is the benefit of it? Every two or three years there is a flood. So, why don't you have a national plan? I know the previous Government sanctioned Rs. 62 crores to save these areas from erosion and for protection against floods. But if you are to spend the same value now, it

will amount to Rs. 140 to Rs. 150 crores. So, I would like to know whether the West Bengal Government has again repeated the same request to the Central Government to sanction this amount. This also may kindly be replied to by the Minister.

Now, about the danger that has been created this time, if the Ganga, Bhagirathi and Pagla, in course of time get mixed up, then we cannot imagine the dangerous situation which will be created as a result of that. So, has the Government collected any information from the Engineers and other staff? The Team which was sent from the Centre went there and they have already come back with their recommendations. The West Bengal Government has asked for Rs. 10 crores to give relief to the flood affected people. So, this is the situation which is prevailing: it is a very dangerous one. Not only is the Farakka Barrage in danger, but the Nadia district has been affected; Nadia and Shantipur also are under flood water. The purpose for which the Farakka Barrage was built will be defeated if the Government does not necessarily take up the issue and try to save the situation in an effective manner.

My first question is: Sidhartha Shankar Ray's Government asked for Rs. 62 crores. Now the West Bengal Government, after calculating everything, have come to a decision that you have to pay them Rs. 140 crores to at least see that the flood is controlled for the time being, and the Rs. 10 crores that has been recently asked after the visit of your team. You are not in the know of the fact that your team which went there has come back and has already recommended Rs. 10 crores. I want to know whether you are going to sanction that money for which the Chief Minister himself came here and he also talked to the Prime Minister and placed the same demand like the Irrigation Minister, Mr. Roy who is also here now. I had a talk with him this morning. He also requested me to take up this issue with Mr. Barnala, so that effective steps may be taken.

So, 3 or 4 districts are affected and the Central Government has its responsibility.

I will end with the point whether the Government is thinking about having a national flood control plan so that they are not to spend every year. You know China has completely controlled floods in Tsang Po and not only floods are controlled but lakhs and crores of people have got employment and so many acres of land came under cultivation. Why is it not possible for us what is possible for China? So I request you that you are now having

[Shri Dinan Bhattacharya]

very good relations with the Chinese Government. Why should not our Minister and see what has taken place there and how they have controlled floods? That will encourage him and will help him to get rid of this flood havoc every year in ever State of our country.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE
(Jadavpur): We want satisfactory answers.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: Plans are being prepared for flood control. As the hon. Member has suggested, there should be plans for protection for the entire areas. For example, the Ganga Flood Control Commission has prepared an outline plan for flood control in the Ganga Basin amounting to Rs. 1043 crores. Now it is being supplemented by several sub-basin riverwise plans. So these plans are under study. During 1977-78 the Ganga Flood Control Commission has examined five major flood control and drainage projects for sanction by the Planning Commission which have all been approved. Out of these, one is the urgent development works in the Sunderbans, then the Gandak, Kunur River Embankment, Ghia-Kundi Drainage and the Sone embankment schemes. All these referred to the Planning Commission have been approved.

So, we are trying to have a comprehensive plan so that it can be executed and more areas can be protected from floods. We have also set up a working group on flood control and drainage. They will also take into account anti-erosion steps. For that also in the coming plan we propose to spend about Rs. 680 crores for all these measures. Earlier the total amount was not even spent in Five Year Plans so that the total expenditure is Rs. 633 crores. But in one plan period we are going to spend about Rs. 680 crores and within this year Rs. 126 crores are going to be spent on flood protection measures.

SHRI DINAN BHATTACHARYA: May I know one thing? I have suggested that if he cannot go to China, at least he should go to Murshidabad and other flood affected areas. Why are you not visiting those places? Why are you depending on the bureaucrats? Why are you not taking the relief measures for which the West Bengal Government is pressing again and again? With folded hands I request the Minister to reply to that. Why is he hesitating to go there?

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: After the Parliament session, I propose to visit some of the flood-affected areas and find out myself what can be done. Even in China it is not that in the entire China there are no floods. There are floods also in some areas.

डा० राजकी सिंह (बापलपुर):

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, इस ध्यानाकर्षक प्रस्ताव में दो बातें कही गई हैं, एक तो मुर्शिदाबाद और मालदा में बाढ़ की स्थिति और दूसरी बात जो सबसे बड़ा राष्ट्रीय चिन्तन का विषय है, वह है करकका बांध पर खतरा। माननीय मंत्री जी ने बताया है कि करकका बांध पर खतरा नहीं है। उन के जवाब से संतोष तो होता है लेकिन जो रिपोर्ट है, मैं चाहूंगा कि माननीय मंत्री जी उस पर ध्यान विचार दें। जहाँ तक करकका बांध पर खतरे की बात है उसके सम्बन्ध में यह रिपोर्ट है—

"Floods in West Bengal have reached a serious situation as swollen Padma is inching towards river Bhagirathi—Murshidabad district, threatening Farakka barrage constructed to regulate water-flow for maintaining of Calcutta Port."

On the other sides of the border, Padma has overtopped the Farakka system's afflux from bundh at 9 points and gorged through its bank towards the Bhagirathi. Erosion has already reduced the land gap between the two rivers at Sidaiganj town four miles to more 8000 feet. The flood waters have also overtopped Jangipur barrage.

इस के बाद यह बात मेरी समझ में नहीं आती है कि करकका बांध पर खतरा कैसे नहीं है। हिन्दुस्तान स्टैंडर्ड की भां यह रिपोर्ट है—

"According to reports, there are gaps in some embankments erected by Farakka Barrage. Authority through which waters are rushing out and flooding surrounding areas. The matter needs a thorough probe."

इसलिए एक बात तो मैं यह पूछना चाहूंगा कि ये जो रिपोर्ट प्रकाशित हुई हैं वे सचर नज़र हैं। तो यह इन को नज़र कहां और सचर इन में थोड़ा सत्य है तो एक राष्ट्रीय सम्पत्ति को बचाने के लिए किसी जांच की व्यवस्था करें।

दूसरा प्रश्न है मुक्तिबाध और मालवा के सम्बन्ध में। वेस्ट बंगाल के रिजर्व मिनिस्टर राधिकारंजन बेनर्जी ने जो बातें कही हैं उसमें 10 करोड़ 35 लाख रुपये की क्षति उम्हनी बताई है। मुक्तिबाध के 450 गांव 300 वर्गमील में जलमग्न हो चुके हैं। 9 लाख लोग मुक्तिबाध और मालवा में प्रभावित हैं। ऐसी स्थिति है। फरक्का बैरेज जब बना था तो उसके तीन उद्देश्यों में एक उद्देश्य यह था—

(1) easing the flood problems at critical junctures the Bhagirathi-Hooghly representing the most important branch system in West Bengal.

लेकिन मुझको तो लगता है कि फरक्का बांध बनने के बाद बाढ़ के खतरे बंगाल में कम नहीं हुए हैं बल्कि बंगाल और बिहार दोनों को बाढ़ के खतरे बढ़ गए हैं। इसीलिए मैं यह धारणा से कहना चाहूंगा कि बहुत-बहुत यह प्रकृति की विनाशालिना नहीं है बल्कि मानव का प्रकृति के साथ नासमझी-पूर्ण खिलवाड़ है। हर जगह जो धारा यह स्टाप गैप करेजमेंट करते रहते हैं और छोटे-छोटे बांध बनाते रहते हैं, किसी मास्टर प्लान की चर्चा नहीं करते हैं उसी के कारण ऐसा हो रहा है। इस बार भी 750 करोड़ रुपये की क्षति हिन्दुस्तान में पलट से हुई है और हम एक मास्टर प्लान माध्यम दूसरी सलाहों में बनाएंगे।

इसलिए मैं पहला प्रश्न यह करना चाहूंगा कि क्या यह बाढ़ प्रकृति की स्वेच्छा-परिवाही नहीं, बल्कि मानव का प्रकृति के साथ बेसमझीबरा खिलवाड़ नहीं है? यह कहा गया है—

We are interfering with the topography.

और यही कारण है कि बाघ यह बाढ़ बढ़ रही है। बिहार का भावलपुर और

मंगेर का इलाका जलमग्न पड़ा हुआ है। वह लोग कहते हैं कि फरक्का बैरेज में जो अवरोध है उसी के कारण देश के जो ऊँचे हिस्से हैं उनमें बाढ़ आती है, इस के सम्बन्ध में मंत्री जी का क्या विचार है?

दूसरी बात—फरक्का का जो मुख्य उद्देश्य था वह झूठा साबित हुआ है। बाढ़ नियंत्रण का जो उसका उद्देश्य था क्या उसमें वह विफल नहीं हुआ है और विफल हुआ है तो माननीय मंत्री जी उस के लिए क्या करना चाहते हैं?

तीसरी बात यह है कि बाढ़ नियंत्रण की समस्या को हल करने के लिए बिहार के मुख्य मंत्री और उत्तर प्रदेश के मुख्य मंत्री ने जो जोर दिया है कि प्रधान मंत्री जी नेपाल में जाकर के जबतक बाढ़ नियंत्रण के लिए कोई समझौता नहीं करते हैं तब तक इन प्रवेसों में बाढ़ की स्थिति पर काबू नहीं पाया जा सकता है, तो प्रधान मंत्री जी इस के लिए क्या नेपाल जाएंगे और जाएंगे तो कब जाएंगे?

श्री सुरवीर सिंह बरमाणा : जहाँ तक फरक्का बांध का तात्त्विक है, फरक्का बांध का जो मुख्य उद्देश्य था वह यह था कि कलकत्ता पोर्ट को पानी मुहैया किया जा सके, कलकत्ता पोर्ट बंद न हो जाय सिस्टिम होने की वजह से। मुख्य उद्देश्य उसका यह नहीं था कि बाढ़ रोकनी जाय। बाढ़ रोकने में साधन सहायता कुछ हो सके, लेकिन मुख्य उद्देश्य यह नहीं था। इसलिए मैं कहूंगा कि फरक्का का जो प्राकृतिक बाध दूरा हुआ है, कलकत्ता पोर्ट में पानी की स्थिति बेहतर हुई है। जो ऐसे पीरिस्ड हैं जहाँ पानी कम हो जाता है उस पीरिस्ड में पोर्ट को पानी दिया जा सकेगा। इस खत बड़ी अच्छी स्थिति रही है।

[श्री सुरजीत सिंह बरनाल]

माननीय सदस्य ने जो यह बताया इसके बारे में कि रिपोर्ट है बहुत नुकसान हो गया है फरक्का बराज का तो उस के बारे में जो इंकारमेंशन है वह मैं बता देना चाहूंगा :

"The recent flood has not done any damage to Farakka or Jangirpur Barrage to the Feeder Canal, or to the upstream lock at Farakka. However, an attempt had been made by about 1000 villagers at about 3.30 A.M. on 20-8-1978 to cut the earthen bund protecting the lock channel and the feeder canal from spilt floods of river Ganga. Timely intervention by the Project authorities had saved the situation as otherwise a very high discharge would have passed through the lock channel and would have damaged not only the lock works but also the Feeder Canal. The situation is, however, now under control. BSF are now guarding the area."

इसलिए सति होने को बुझाया भी अगर बन्द न किया जाता लेकिन जो उन्होंने बीच किया था उसे पीके पर बन्द कर दिया गया और उस एरिया का नुकसान नहीं हो सका है।

दूसरे प्रापने नेपाल जाने की बात कही है ता ५० पों और बिहार के मुख्य मंत्री प्राइम मिनिस्टर के मिले थे, मुझ से भी बात पीत की थी इसके बारे में और पहले जब था प्राइम मिनिस्टर नेपाल गए तो इस बारे में बात करके आये थे और उनकी बात बहुत हलचल फैल चुके हैं। धनी दोरों में बाजपेयी जी वहाँ जाने वाले हैं वे भी इस बारे में बात करेंगे और इसको परस्पर करेंगे क्योंकि बहुत सा पानी नेपाल की तरफ से आता है। नेपाल ने बांध बनाने के बाद बाढ़ में बहुत कुछ बचावट आ सकता है। इसको बड़े हार्ड लेबल पर और बड़ी तीव्रता से करने की कोशिश की जा रही है।

11.37 hrs.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

EIGHTY-NINTH AND NINETY-FIRST REPORTS

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO (Hannamkonda): Sir, I beg to present the following Reports of the Public Accounts Committee:—

(1) Eighty-ninth Report on action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Sixth Report on 'Other Direct Taxes' relating to the Ministry of Finance (Department of Revenue).

(2) Ninety-first Report on paragraph 9 of the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year 1974-75, Union Government (Railways) relating to 'Collaboration Agreement for Manufacture of Diesel Engine for Shunters'.

श्री० हरीराम मन्नासर मोहारा (बीकानेर) : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, माननीय मंत्री जी श्री बाढ़ के सम्बन्ध में बात कर रहे थे। हमारे बीकानेर क्षेत्र में बम्बर नदी से जो नाला बड़ीपल राजस्थान कनाल के पास से निकाला गया है उसने 20 बांध तबाह कर दिए हैं। हमारे यहाँ तीस-तीस फिट पानी भरा हुआ है। सरकार द्वारा उस क्षेत्र में मछली पकड़ने का ठेका दिया जा रहा है वहाँ के गरीबों को सरकार की तरफ से न तो कोई मुआवजा दिया गया है और न कोई उनीन दी गई है।

हमारे क्षेत्र में पाने के पानी की कमी है। मैं चाहता हूँ कि इस मामले के पानी का उपयोग बीकानेर क्षेत्र में पाने के पानी के लिए किया जाये। मेरा यह भी सुझाव है कि इस फलव के पानी को नहर निकाली जाये ताकि वहाँ की फसल बच सके और लोगों का नुकसान न हो।

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय : यह सार करके प्राप मंत्री जी की है व है।