

RAJYA SABHA

Monday the 20th July, 2009/ 29/Asadha, 1931 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock,
MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

श्री वृजभूषण तिवारी : सर, अभी उत्तर प्रदेश में...(व्यवधान)...

श्री सभापति : आप प्रश्न काल चलने दीजिए।...(व्यवधान)...

प्रो. राम गोपाल यादव : सर, मेरा भी एक नोटिस था...(व्यवधान)...

श्री नन्द किशोर यादव : सर, हम लोगों ने नोटिस दिया था कि प्रश्न काल स्थगित करके सबसे पहले उस पर चर्चा कराइए।

श्री सभापति : देखिए, यह सब प्रश्न काल के बाद होगा।

Progress of IPI Gas pipeline project

*221. SHRI D. RAJA: ††

SHRI M.P. ACHUTHAN:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that satisfactory progress has not been made in discussions with Iran and Pakistan on the 7 billion dollar Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline project;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is a fact that Iran and Pakistan have already signed an agreement on this project; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) India is pursuing the import of natural gas from Iran through Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) Gas Pipeline Project. Various important issues, viz., pricing of gas, delivery point of gas, project structure, payment of transportation tariff and transit fees for passage of natural gas through Pakistan, etc., are under discussion amongst the participating countries.

Such multilateral projects involve protracted discussions, as all the aspects have to be carefully examined and deliberated upon to the satisfaction of the participating countries to protect each country's interests and to avoid any problems in the future in the successful operation of the Project.

(c) and (d) According to official statements and media accounts, the Inter-Governmental Framework Declaration (IGFD) to support the Gas Pipeline Project between Iran and Pakistan has

††The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri D. Raja

been signed by Iran and Pakistan. Further, Gas Sale and Purchase Agreement (GSPA) between Iran and Pakistan has been concluded. Specifics of either IGFD or GSPA have not been made public.

SHRI D. RAJA: Sir, natural gas and oil are very important for the economic development in the contemporary history. Iran happens to be the second country which has the largest deposits of natural gas. The Government of India has admitted that the Iran-Pakistan-India Gas Pipelines Project is quite feasible and economically viable. If so, when Iran and Pakistan are entering into agreements and continuing their dialogue, why India is not participating in any such dialogue? I am asking this question precisely for one reason.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question, please. Question only.

SHRI D. RAJA: Yes, Sir. It is the United States of America which has been trying to keep Iran out of any Central Asian or South Asian joint gas pipeline project and openly opposing this Iran-Pakistan-India Gas Pipelines Project. The previous regime.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Rajaji, please, no statement; just one question.

SHRI D. RAJA: Sir, my question is very simple and straight. Why India has not been taking any pro-active role in realising this Iran-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline Project? It is because of the US Pressure?

SHRI MURLI DEORA: Sir, first, I assure the hon. Member that the energy needs of our country are paramount and a decision will be taken in the best national interest of our country. There is no question of any external pressure as far as energy security is concerned.

The hon. Member talked about participation. I assure him that there were almost nine meetings at all levels, from the Energy Ministers of three countries to the Heads of States of the three countries. They had several meetings. And all of them decided that the project should go ahead. They are very sure that this project is good for India; it is good for Iran; and it is good for Pakistan. There are some problems which are coming up, and that is why it is delayed. But we are sure that we will be able to overcome all of them.

SHRI D. RAJA: Sir, my second supplementary is related to our domestic affairs. On the basis of the recommendation of the Twelfth Finance Commission, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has taken up the issue of profit from gas with the Central Government. It says that the profit from gas be shared between the Centre and the State. Whether the gas.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just one question, Mr. Raja.

SHRI D. RAJA: Sir, this is related to domestic affairs.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But is it related to the main question?

SHRI D. RAJA: Sir, it is a comprehensive issue.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But the supplementary must arise out of the answer given.

SHRI D. RAJA: Sir, I agree with you. We are trying to get natural gas from Iran. My point is: What are we doing to augment our own natural gas which is available? And, how do you engage the public

sector companies – the GAIL and the ONGC? This is my second supplementary.

SHRI MURLI DEORA; Sir, I am sorry, it is a different question and it is not related to the main question.

DR. C.P. THAKUR: Sir, a survey was done and it was found that there was a large amount of gas in sub-Himalayan belt in Bihar. Had the Government done anything to explore that?

SHRI JITIN PRASADA: Sir, the question does not arise out of the question that has been answered. ...*(Interruptions)*... But, we will have a look at the matter. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would like to request the hon. Members to put questions focussed on the main question and the reply given.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Sir, let me focus because whatever the hon. Minister has said about the paramount need of gas, there is no doubt about it. I would like to know from the hon. Minister: What is the time schedule? This is going on for years and years and years. Is there any time frame by which we can expect the supply of gas from Iran through this pipeline? How fast can we get it? That is what is more important.

SHRI MURLI DEORA: There is no doubt that this project has delayed considerably. But, there are various lacunae or problems which have come up. Some of them are that we have not been able to decide about the price formula, what will be the price, transportation tariff, guaranteed gas supply, transit fees, delivery point where it will be delivered, etc. Now, the major block is the delivery point. While India wanted it on India-Pakistan border, Pakistanis and Iranis wanted it on the other side of the border, that is, Pakistan-Iran border. This was a very important point. The project structure is also important. Still, a dialogue is going on among the three countries and we have not been able to decide about it. So, I assure the Member that we are trying our best. You are right that this project is very vital for the natural gas needs of the country.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, what is the time-frame? ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI MURLI DEORA: That's what I replied. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE: Sir, the Minister has failed to specifically reply as to what is the time-frame. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI JITIN PRASADA: Sir, the time-frame can only be committed when these bottlenecks are taken care of. If we are not sure where the gas will be given, whether it will be given on the Iran-Pakistan border or the India-Pakistan border, we cannot commit the time-frame. We can't commit until these problems are sorted out with regard to transportation tariff through Pakistan, what will be the rate, how much will it cost, what are the security concerns, etc. As far as Iran goes, we are still not sure. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, please. ...*(Interruptions)*... I think, the Minister has answered. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI JITIN PRASADA: There are talks. Unless these issues are clarified, no time frame can be given. These are issues of vital importance. How can you set a time- frame when these issues have not been sorted out?

प्रो. राम गोपाल यादव : श्रीमन्, लोगों के मन में दो सवाल हैं, एक तो सिक्योरिटी का सवाल है और दूसरा सवाल अमैरिकन प्रेशर का है। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि इस संबंध यूएस से क्या आपकी कोई वार्ता हुई है? आप कृपया इसका स्पैसिफिक जवाब देने की कृपा करें।

श्री मुरली देवरा : अमरीका के एनर्जी सेक्रेटरी श्री ब्रॉडमैन लास्ट ईयर जब भारत वर्ष आए, तब उन्होंने भी हमसे यह बात पूछी, लेकिन हमने उनसे क्लीयर-कट कहा और उनको यह मालूम भी था कि यह हमारा आपस का मामला है एवं ईरान, पाकिस्तान और भारत, तीनों ही इस बात पर सहमत हैं। इस बारे में अमरीका की तरफ से कोई भी एक्सपेक्टेड नहीं है, लेकिन आपको मालूम है कि अमरीका में एक क्रायदा चल रहा है, जिसका नाम है, "ईरान-लिबिया सैंक्शन ऐक्ट"। इस ऐक्ट के अनुसार अगर कोई कंट्री या कोई कंपनी ईरान में 20 मिलियन डॉलर से ज्यादा इन्वेस्टमेंट करती है तो उस पर अमरीकन गवर्नमेंट की सैंक्शन्स लग सकती हैं। लेकिन हमारे यहां उसके लागू होने का कोई सवाल ही नहीं है। मुझे पुरा विश्वास है कि इसमें किसी भी अमरीकन कंपनी का किसी तरह का कोई हाथ नहीं रहेगा।

* 222. [The questioner (Ms. Sushila Tiriya) was absent. For answer *vide* page 22 *infra*]

Inclusion in ST List

*223. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Mowar/Mauwar was enlisted in Scheduled Tribes (ST) list till 1950;

(b) if so, the reasons for exclusion of this community from the ST list;

(c) whether Government has received any representation from this community for consideration of their tribe to be included again in the ST list; and

(d) if so, the present status of the case?

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) No, Madam. The first list of Scheduled Tribes was notified on 06/09/1950 through the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, wherein "Mowar/Mauwar" does not appear as a Scheduled Tribe in any of the listed States.

(c) and (d) The Ministry of Tribal Affairs received a proposal dated 22/08/2003 from the State Government of Chhattisgarh for inclusion of "Mowar" in the list of Scheduled Tribes in Chhattisgarh. The proposal has been processed as per modalities approved by the Government on 15/06/1999, which provides that the proposal of the State Government must be agreed to by the Registrar General of India and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes. The Office of the Registrar General of India has not supported this proposal *vide* its letter dated 27/03/2006. The Ministry of