

INDO-PAK CONFERENCE ON EASTERN RIVERS

- *32- SHRI CHITTA BASU† : SHRI A. D. MANI ; SHRI BIREN ROY : SHRI C. ACHUTHA MENON : SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA
 MENON : SHRI N. SRI RAMA REDDY : SARDAR RAM SINGH : SHRI LOKANATH MISRA : SHRI S. S. MARISWAMY : SHRI SUNDAR SINGH BHANDARI :
 SHRI MAN SINGH VARMA : SHRI JAIRAMDAS DAULATRAM †
 DR. (MRS.) MANGLADEVI TALWAR :

Will the Minister of IRRIGATION AND POWER be pleased to state :

- (a) whether it is a fact that a joint conference of the representatives of Pakistan and India was held in Delhi in May last, on the Farakka Barrage and other Indian projects on the rivers in the eastern region of the sub-continent;
 (b) if so, what was the outcome of the conference;
 (c) what progress has so far been made in regard to the Farakka Barrage and the Feeder Canal linking the Ganga and the Bhagirathi rivers;
 (d) whether there is likely to be any change in the time and plan schedules for the Farakka Barrage Project as a result of the talks held with Pakistan; and
 (e) when are the talks on the projects mentioned in part (a) above, likely to be held again?†

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION AND

STATEMENT

- (a) and (b) A meeting of the Water Resources Experts of India and Pakistan was held in Delhi on the 26th of May, 1968. These talks

†The question was actually asked in the floor of the House by Shri Chitta Basu

in continuation of the earlier meetings between the Water Resources Experts of the two countries in respect of certain specific projects on the eastern rivers in the two countries. Data was exchanged in respect of these projects. But the Pakistan delegation wanted to discuss other matters beyond the purview of these talks. The Indian delegation confined the discussions to the technical aspects of these specific projects. During the course of the discussions the Pakistan delegation expressed the view that no useful purpose would be served by the continuance of the talks at technical level and that a meeting between the two Governments should now be held, assisted by experts, if necessary. They also suggested that the two Governments should seek the assistance of an International Agency like the World Bank. The Indian delegation did not agree with this view. They pointed out that there were still serious gaps in the information relating to the Pakistan irrigation projects based on the Padma and in the absence of this data a meeting at Governmental level would not be meaningful. They also did not accept the suggestion to induct an outside party in the discussion and pointed out that the Pakistan and Indian engineers were fully competent in the field of water resources development. The Indian delegation, therefore, suggested that further technical discussions between the experts of the two countries should be held and studies made in respect of the technical aspects of these projects.

India agreed to the inspection of the Farakka Barrage site by the Pakistan experts. This visit took place on the 21st and 22nd June, 1968.

The Pakistan Government have also agreed in principle to the visit of the Indian experts to the areas of the Ganges-Kobadak project on a date to be mutually fixed.

(c) and (d) Work on 69 out of 109 bays, representing about 2/3rd of the Barrage, has been substantially completed and about 1500 feet of the bridge is also ready. Considerable progress has been made in the excavation of the feeder canal. The work is proceeding at an accelerated pace and the talks held with Pakistan will not adversely affect the plan or the time schedule for the completion of the Project.

(e) A date for holding a further meeting of the Water Resources Experts has not yet been fixed.

SHRI CHITTA BASU : In the statement it has been said that Pakistan also suggested that the two Governments should seek the help of an international agency like the World Bank. In this context may I know from the hon'ble Minister whether the Soviet Prime Minister, Mr. Kosygin, has written to the Government of India urging upon the Government to accept third party mediation in the matter of solution of this dispute? If it is so, what has been the reaction of the Government so far ?

DR. K. L. RAO : The hon'ble Prime Minister of the U.S.S.R. only said that both these countries should show goodwill and try to find a mutually acceptable solution. For example, he suggested a solution as in the case of the Indus waters. He never suggested anywhere that a third party should be brought in. The Government of India is very definite that no third party will be allowed to come in the way of discussion between these two countries; it will be a bilateral discussion.

SHRI CHITTA BASU : In view of the Government of India's position that Pakistan has got no case in the matter of further division of water from the Ganges to Pakistan, may I know, Sir, whether the Government of India is inclined to agree with me that this inflated demand by Pakistan is meant only to stall the completion of the plan itself? If this is so, will the Government assure this honourable House that the plan will be completed within the scheduled time whatever might be the obstructionist policy from Pakistan or any other quarter of the world?

DR. K. L. RAO : It is true that the Pakistan demands are very highly inflated to almost absurd limits. I may submit to the House that the Farakka Barrage which was to be completed in June 1971 is now going to be completed one year earlier,

DR. BIREN ROY : In the statement it is stated that considerable progress has been made in the excavation of the feeder canal. May I know, Sir, if the Minister knows that the Calcutta port is suffering a lot for the last 20 to 25 years and ships with drafts of 26ft. even now cannot come straight into the port and we need 40,000 cusecs of water to flow into the Hooghly. What arrangement has therefore been made to expedite the completion of this canal at least now which is only about 35 miles?

DR. K. L. RAO : I want to submit to the House that this is one of the biggest engineering projects in the world and it will naturally take some time. As I submitted earlier, this barrage is more important and it is being expedited. We are now expecting the barrage to be completed one year earlier, in June 1970. The feeder canal of which 40 per cent, of work has been done will also be expedited. It will be ready by the time the barrage is ready. At any rate, we expect that to be in operation in June 1970—June 1971.

SHRI BIREN ROY : May I know, Sir ...

MR. CHAIRMAN : How can you... ..

SHRI BIREN ROY : It is my second supplementary.

MR. CHAIRMAN : How can you get a second chance when there are so many names? Mr. Achutha Menon.

SHRI C. ACHUTHA MENON : May I know, Sir, if it is a fact that the World Bank has shown some interest in this project? I want to know whether there has been a suggestion for mediation by the World Bank? If that is so, what is the Government's position with regard to that? Is the Government prepared to categorically say that we are not prepared to brook any interference in this matter and that we will settle the question by bilateral negotiations as we have conveyed to the Soviet Union?

DR. K. L. RAO : We have not had any communication from the World Bank about this subject. Only there have been some sort of feelers or information in the newspapers. Whatever it might be, the World Bank has no part to play in this and we are very definite that the work should be completed as per our plans and if any discussions are to be held with Pakistan they should be only bilateral and no other agency will be allowed to come in.

(Some hon. members stood up in their seats.)

MR. CHAIRMAN : When there are so many names I would like to give a chance to everybody with different affiliations and then come over to those who belong to the same party. Mr. Ram Singh. (Shri JV. Sri Rama Reddy stood up in his seat.) I shall finish the rest of the affiliations and then come to you.

SARDAR RAM SINGH : In view of the Soviet Union still giving arms aid to Pakistan, will it not be difficult to solve this question now ?

DR. K. L. RAO : As I submitted, the Soviet Prime Minister simply expressed the wish that this problem may be solved. There is nothing more that he said.

श्री सुन्दर सिंह भंडारी : मैं मंत्री महोदय से उनके वक्तव्य के सम्बन्ध में ही कुछ बातें पूछना चाहूंगा। यहां पर है कि यह बैठक "certain specific projects" के लिये बुलाई गई थी लेकिन इसमें कहा गया है कि पाकिस्तान ने "other matters beyond the purview of these talks" उन्हें भी इसमें शामिल किया। तो इसलिये कि हम लोगों को समझने में मदद मिले, मंत्री महोदय यह बताने की कोशिश करें कि "certain specific projects" कौन से थे जिसको लेकर मीटिंग बुलाई गई और पाकिस्तान ने उसमें और कौन कौन से मैटर्स डालने की कोशिश की जिसके बारे में हमने यह कहा कि इस बैठक की परव्यु के बाहर है? उसके साथ साथ इस स्टेटमेंट में यह है कि जो हिन्दुस्तान के लोग थे उन्होंने इस बात पर आपत्ति की।

"They pointed out that there were still serious gaps in the information relating to Pakistan irrigation projects based on the Padma....."

अर्थात्, पद्मा की बातें उस बैठक में लाई गई। भारत की तरफ से वही आपत्ति की गई कि उसका पूरा विवरण नहीं था। मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह पूछता हूँ कि अगर पद्मा के ऊपर निर्भर करने वाली सारी सिंचाई योजनाओं की सूची, जो पाकिस्तान अब बढ़ाता जा रहा है, अगर भारत के सामने रख दी जाय तो भारत उन सभी योजनाओं के लिये पानी देने का किस हद तक जिम्मेदार है और क्या इसकी कोई सीमा है या हमारे ऊपर कोई बंधन है जिसके आधार पर पद्मा के भरोसे पर निर्माण होने वाली सारी इरिगेशन पोटेन्शियल का हम पूरा करें। आपकी इजाजत से मैं एक बात कहने के लिये क्षमा चाहता हूँ कि जो डेलीगेशन यहां बात करने के लिये आया—मैं मंत्री महोदय के डिपार्टमेंट

की एक्सपर्ट नालेज पर आक्षेप नहीं कर रहा, मुझे उस पर गर्व है, पूरा विश्वास है लेकिन पाकिस्तान के डेलीगेशन में एक्सपर्ट्स नहीं थे, पालिटिशियन्स और आई० ए० एस० आफिसर्स थे। इस सवाल को वह किस तरह से देखना चाहते हैं? क्या आप अपने मंत्रिमंडल को यह सजेस्ट नहीं करेंगे कि आफिशियल्स से बातचीत करने की बजाय वह पोलिटिकल लेवल पर बात हो?

DR. K. L. RAO : Sir, the Pakistan delegation wanted to raise some matters which were not within the purview of these talks; that is to say, these talks were intended purely to cover an exchange of data between the two Governments on the various projects concerned. They wanted to go in for an examination of the various projects in the Ganga basin like the Gandak, Kosi and many other projects. But we did not accept that. Similarly they wanted the question to be referred to a U. N. body like the World Bank, they wanted the question to be taken up at the Ministerial level, and so on. All these things were extraneous to the function of the expert body that was set up. Therefore, our delegation persistently refused to be drawn into a discussion of these various matters. Then with regard to the word "Padma", the hon. House may know that the Ganga is called Padma in the limits of Pakistan. The reason, of course, is, that the Ganga originally flowing by Calcutta was called Bhagirathi, and Padma was only another spill flowing into East Pakistan. But about 400 years back, a change took place and Padma became the major Ganga and Bhagirathi became the smaller one. In fact, it is our contention that Bhagirathi represents the main basin of the Ganga and Farakka is for use in Ganga proper. It is true that Pakistan is proposing some fantastic schemes in the lower reaches of Padma. But we are not accepting that. In these discussions we wanted that they should examine...

SHRI SUNDAR SINGH BHANDARI : What details do we require then?

DR. K. L. RAO : The details were like this. The Pakistan experts said that they wanted 49,000 cusecs. Now 49,000 cusecs represents probably almost three-fourths of the entire flow of the Ganges river in dry month. It is almost absurd to think of that. That project is

called the Ganga-Koba project. Therefore, we wanted to ask them for the various details of this project. But they were not able to furnish us this information.

SHRI K.P. SUBRAMANIA MENON: May I know from the hon- Minister whether the Pakistani delegation walked out of the conference and suggested that the issue should be settled at the political level instead of at the technical level?

DR. K. L. RAO : First, I want to submit that the Pakistani delegation never walked out. We always manage affairs smoothly. Though they talked on for nearly 13 days and were sometimes very difficult to deal with, still we managed to keep our tempers cool, and walking out was not allowed. Now with regard to the other question of the hon. Member, I would submit that they wanted that this problem should be discussed at the Ministerial level. We said the time is not ripe and the data is not sufficient. Therefore, we did not accept the suggestion of Ministerial discussions at this stage.

SHRI N. SRI RAMA REDDY : I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether any terms of reference were fixed before the conference was arranged between India and Pakistan. Secondly, I would like to know what the attitude of the Government of India is towards interference of an international agency in this dispute. Thirdly, may I also know whether any date for a further meeting of the water resources experts has been fixed? Is any correspondence going on on this subject, or is the chapter closed?

DR. K. L. RAO : Sir, regarding terms of reference, there were no specific terms except that the meetings are intended to discuss at the technical level the various details of the projects which will be in Pakistan and Farakka and Tiesta. Now with regard to the international agency, Sir, I have submitted that the Government of India is very definitely against it. In fact, the Indus case has no parallel to this. The two are entirely dissimilar cases. And under no circumstances, interference by a third party is justified. In fact, even as far back as 1957 Pakistan made such a suggestion, but our then Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, refused flatly to have anything to do with inducting any other agency into this dispute. And with regard to the fixing of the date for a further meeting, we are not in a very great hurry. We are

going on with our projects and it is for Pakistan to come round and ask for the date. We have kept the matter open.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA : The Pakistani delegation wants this to be taken up at the political level and their suggestion coincides with suggestion that our Government has received from Premier Kosygin. Does the Government find any deeper import in this, particularly when Pakistan is being armed to the teeth with Russian arms? (Interruption.) May I know whether the Government of India are able to find any deeper import in all these coincidences and whether do not dismiss all this as coincidence? Further, may I also know whether the hon. Minister is prepared to lay on the Table of the House a copy of Mr. Kosygin's letter to the Prime Minister? The country is extremely desirous to know the contents of this particular letter. Will he kindly place it on the Table of the House for the information of the Members of Parliament?

DR. K. L. RAO : Sir, I must submit that there was no suggestion in Mr. Kosygin's letter so far as this question of Ganga waters is concerned. There is no suggestion of any type...

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA : Sir, he denies a particular fact. But let us know what the letter contains.

DR. K. L. RAO : There was no suggestion of any Ministerial level talks or of the World Bank being brought in. For one thing, the hon. Member may know that the U.S.S.R. is not a member of the World Bank and therefore, they will be the last people to suggest anything like that.

SHRI M. N. KAUL : What have they suggested?

DR. K. L. RAO : The only thing they have said is—I am giving you the exact sentence—'that both countries should show goodwill in the search for a mutually acceptable solution as has been done in the case of the problem of the use of waters of rivers in the Indus basin.' There is no suggestion

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA : On a point of order. If it is only goodwill that they suggested, then why is it that the Prime Minister is not accepting it? Is our Prime Minister not accepting goodwill from any country?

DR. K. L. RAO : I want to submit that any country can give us advice. In fact it is one of our ancient Indian sayings that whenever anybody gives you any suggestions, you must hear him "very patiently but you must take your own time to make decisions.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA : Are you convinced, Sir ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : He states his view.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA : It is not a question of view, Sir. We elicit information and the Minister should furnish that information. I wanted to know the contents of Prime Minister Kosygin's letter to our Prime Minister. He says it contains goodwill. The Prime Minister has refused the suggestions made by Premier Kosygin. Do I then take it for granted that the goodwill that was sent by Premier Kosygin was refused by our Prime Minister ?

DR. K. L. RAO : I did not say it contained goodwill. All that I said was that he has stated that both countries must show goodwill in the search for finding a mutually acceptable solution as in the case of the Indus waters.

SHRI SUNDAR SINGH BHANDARI : Whatever the contents of the letter and the reference made to the water dispute between India and Pakistan, why should it not be laid on the Table so that Members may know it ?

DR. K. L. RAO : I submit that that is for the hon. Prime Minister.

SHRI S. S. MARISWAMY : Pakistan at one stage of the deliberations had suggested that we should have an international agency like the World Bank. This was previous to Kosygin taking interest. May I know whether they still want the World Bank or they want the Russian intervention in the matter?

DR. K. L. RAO : That is true. As far back as 1957 Pakistan wanted the World Bank to come in. They are still persisting in the same thing. Pakistan never suggested the U.S.S.R. intervention.

श्री मानसिंह वर्मा : स्टेटमेंट में यह कहा गया है :

"The Pakistan Government have also agreed in principle to the visit of the Indian experts to the areas of the Ganges-Kobadak project on a date to be mutually fixed."

तो मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि इंडियन एक्सपर्ट का विजिट हो चुका है। यदि नहीं हुआ, तो कब तक होने वाला है ?

DR. K. L. RAO : We are expecting to send this party after the monsoon is over, some time in October or November.

DR. (MRS.) MANGLADEVI TAL-WAR : The Ganges is an Indian river; it flows 2 thousand odd miles in India and only about 86 miles in Pakistan. I find that there is a shift recently in the attitude of Pakistan who wants to settle this water dispute on a high political level, not on a technical level. There is enough water in eastern Pakistan not only for irrigation but for other purposes. What they need is irrigation and flood control measures.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please put a question.

DR. (MRS.) MANGLADEVI TAL-WAR : The Hon. Minister has stated that Mr. Kosygin has stated that there should be goodwill on both sides. No doubt goodwill there must be. But India has a very strong case. Now I would like to know the reason for this shift in the attitude of Pakistan when they suggest that it should be done on a political level instead of on a technical level and Mr. Kosygin has thought it fit to equate India and Pakistan in this regard.

DR. K. L. RAO : As I submitted already, the Prime Minister of the U.S.S.R. has never suggested any specific method. All that has been suggested is that an attempt must be made to find a solution. I entirely agree with the hon. Lady Member that Ganga is an Indian river.

*33- [The questioner (Shri T. V. Anandan) was absent. For answer vide col. 215 infra.]

*34- [The questioner (Prof. Shantilal Kothari) was absent. For answer vide col. 215-16 infra.]