

**Cost of Sethusamudram project**

914. SHRI T.K. RANGARAJAN: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

- (a) what is the total cost of Sethusamudram project;
  - (b) how much amount has been spent on this project, so far;
  - (c) whether Government contemplates any realignment of the project;
  - (d) if so, the cost of realigned project;
  - (e) what is the time-frame within which the project is expected to be completed;
- and
- (f) whether Government has finalized the contractors for implementing the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI RADHAKRISHNAN P.): (a) Total project cost of Sethusamudram Ship Channel Project (SSCP) approved in the year 2005 is ₹2427.40 crores.

(b) Total expenditure on the Project till October, 2014 is ₹836.35 crores.

(c) and (d) Government of India is exploring the possibility of alternate route for SSCP through Pamban Pass by avoiding the Ram Sethu/Adam's Bridge area and M/s RITES was entrusted with the work of undertaking prefeasibility study on that area.

(e) The implementation of the Project has been stayed by the Supreme Court of India. Since the matter is *sub-judice* before the Supreme Court, no time frame can be fixed at this stage.

(f) Does not arise.

**Removal of customs duty on marine fuel**

915. SHRI A. W. RABI BERNARD: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Ministry has approached the Ministry of Finance to remove customs duty on marine fuel for vessels carrying cargo for trans-shipment;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the move would increase in export-import cargo handling operations and accrue direct and indirect benefits of more than ₹700 crore and removing the 25-30 per cent customs duty may attract big container ships to domestic shores; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI RADHAKRISHNAN P.): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Recognizing the need to encourage the growth of Indian tonnage, Government has exempted Customs and Excise Duty leviable on bunker fuels, namely IFO 180 CST and IFO 380 CST for use in Indian flag vessels for transportation of EXIM and empty containers between two or more ports in India.

(c) and (d) This tax incentive will go a long way in enhancing Indian tonnage as well as in promoting development of transshipment hubs in India. The Indian port terminals will handle more cargo whereby the port earnings will increase besides, tax benefits to the economy and the Nation.

#### **Improvement of river systems**

916. SHRI PANKAJ BORA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to improve and repair the river systems in the country to prevent floods;

(b) if so, the measures proposed thereon; and

(c) whether a time bound schedule has been proposed to control the alarming situation thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION (SHRI SANWAR LAL JAT): (a) and (b) Projects related to flood management including improvement and repair of the river systems in the country to prevent floods are formulated and implemented by the concerned State Governments as per their priorities, as the subject falls within the purview of the States. The Central Government supplements the efforts of the States through technical advice and financial assistance, for undertaking the required measures in critical areas.

In addition, under the Flood Management Programme (FMP), the Government of India has earmarked an allocation of ₹10,000 crores during the 12th Plan for providing central assistance to the State Governments to enable them to undertake works related to flood management, river management, drainage development and anti-sea erosion, which *inter-alia* covers the critical measures of improvement and repairs of rivers systems.

(c) The 12th Plan Working Group on Flood Management and Region Specific Issues set up by the Planning Commission estimated that an area of 18.78 mha against the