
SETHU SAMUDRAM PROJECT AND ITS RAGING CONTROVERSY IN THE INDIAN NATIONAL PRESS

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Abstract:

There seems to be no end to the 16-year-old war over the controversial Sethusamudram project. The project involves dredging the stretch of water between Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka to make it navigable for ships. At present, this is not possible; the water depth being only a few metres. The project envisages dredging of a ship in the shallow portion of the sea to connect the gulf of Mannar and the bay of Bengal through the Palk Bay. This would provide a continuous navigable sea route around the Indian peninsula channel. It is pointed out that though the Indian subcontinent southern part is surrounded by sea, the coast of India does not have a continuous navigation channel connecting the east and west coasts.

Key words: conflict ,resolution, negotiation, treaty, embargo..

INTRODUCTION:

At present the ships coming from the west coast of India have to navigate around the Sri Lankan coast to go to eastern ports. This is because the existing waterway lying in between the Indian subcontinent and Sri Lanka is shallow and not suitable for the voyage of ships. Another aspect is that Indian navy ships also have to navigate around Sri Lanka. To solve this problem a navigation channel connecting the Gulf of Mannar and Palk Bay through the North of Adam's Bridge has been planned and this is called the Sethusamudram project. Perhaps this may benefit all the coastal districts of Tamil Nadu economically and may not be good for Sri Lankan ports. The fact that the former defense minister of the Vajpayee government took initiative to commence this project suggests that this project is of strategic military importance to India in addition to having economical motives.

METHODOLOGY

The news reports, editorials, features, interviews, photos and letters to the editor were gathered from September 8, 2007 to November 10, 2007 from both the newspapers for this study. Content analysis was applied to the entire sample for categorizing and analyzing data. The news reports, features, interviews, editorials, photos and letters to the editor were coded under various categories and sub-categories. The coded data were subjected to quantitative or qualitative analysis or both after an inter-reliability test to check for the subjectivity of the coder and mutual exclusivity of categories. Content analysis has also been used to analyze the latent content deeper layers of meaning embedded in the reports. The data were analysed qualitatively to study the coverage of events in the two newspapers.

The qualitative analysis has been carried out at two levels. The first levels analyses how the sethusamudram project and its raging controversy in the Indian national press. The second level compares the two newspapers for any major difference in the reporting and analysis of events by choosing specific stories which appeared in both newspapers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Hossain, Ishtiaq (1998) The Ganges water-sharing treaty of 1996 demonstrates that with political good will, it is possible to solve long-standing disputes between the countries of South Asia. The involvement of highest-level political leaders of West Bengal, a state much affected by the water, helped to facilitate a breakthrough in negotiations. The signing of the treaty marks the beginning of a long process to harness the water resources of the two countries and gain economic and social benefits from such efforts. It must be pointed out here, however, that much will depend on the actual implementation of the 1996 accord. Two key provisions give confidence about finding solutions to future problems

Kasymov, Shavkat(2011) Accessibility to groundwater sources for Palestinians has also been significantly diminished, especially for the Palestinians living in the occupied territories, as a result of the construction of the segregation wall by Israel. There will be no peace in the Middle East whatsoever without a viable and cooperative water regulation system that would accommodate the interests and needs of all the populations of the region, especially those directly involved in the military hostilities.

van den Brink, René¹, van der Laan, Gerard¹, Moes, Nigel¹⁽²⁰¹⁰⁾

The failure of interstate allocation and basin planning is not only due to institutional weaknesses and the absence of a firm hand of governance – as is often and rightly pointed out – but also to a lack of space for meaningful engagement of multiple actors. This sets limits to what can be achieved through basin water planning alone.

DEBORAH F. SHMUELI_In the Israel-Arab context, U.S. presidents have played important roles in bringing the parties to the negotiation table. Outside pressure from the U.S. is still required to break the political stalemate and fulfill Oslo II.

DIFFERENT POLITICAL PARTIES:

Several opposition leader former Chief Ministers Criticized the united progressive alliance government, participating in a rally organized / by the Indian national Lok Dal at Ambala to Celebrate the 94th birth anniversary of Devlal. Those who attended the meeting included the former Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav, N.Chandrababu Naidu, and Mudam Hal Khurna. the former Jammu and Kashmir Farooq Abdullah, Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal samaj wadi party MP Amar Singh, Asom gana parishad leader, Brindaban Goswami, Telugu Desam party, leader T.Yerran Naidu, the former Tripura Governor Suttan Singh and BKU leader Mahendra Singh Trkait (Sep 26, 07, The Hindu) with the word Ramar Sethu hitting the national headlines, Adam's bridge, otherwise known a Ramar Sethu had become a must – see destination for the pilgrims and tourists visiting Rameswaram. The AIADMK in its Public Interest Litigation (PIL) represented by its presidium Chairman E. Mdhusudhuan, prayed the court in the event of not preventing the bandh direct the DMK to deposit R.100 crore with the State Chief Secretary to compensate for the damage that could be caused by the DPA parties during the bandh. The centre itself had sought three month to review

the project and to look at an alternative methods to implement in without destroying the ‘Ramar bridge’ (Sep 27, 07, TNIE).

Jayalalitha demanded the resignation of the Central Minister of his party for Karunanidhi’s remark on lord Rama hurt the feelings of Crores of Hindus across the world and such mindless utterances invite punishment under IPC section 295 IT), 298 and 505 IC). If he argued that the bridge was not man made, Everest too was not man-made. Is he ready to destroy the nature’s wonders take mount Everest, (Sep 27, 07, the Hindu, TNIE).

Indian Society today was full of conflicts inflicted in the name of caste creed and religion and all citizens should come forward to foreground the tenants of secularism prince of Arcot (Sep 27, 07, The Hindu) it was also the dream project of the then Chief Minister M.K.Ramachandran under whose rule the assembly passed a unanimous resolution on May 10, 1986, calling upon the centre to implement it without delay S.R.Amadoss (Sep 28, 07, The Hindu).

The ongoing tussle between the saffron brigade and the DMK over Mr.Karunanidhi questioning the existence of Lord Rama took a violent turn on September – 23 when DMK activist allegedly attacked kamalayam the state BJP headquarters in Chennai and ransacked the house of senior state BJP leader Sep 28, 07, The Hindu). The sants and Sedhus of different religions sect spoke on the project. the difference between religion and spirituality were taken note of “But the moment you say you are on a spiritual path, you are seeker. When you say you belong to certain religion, you naturally say that you are believer. Speaking on religion Sri.Jaggi Vasudev said most religions probably started as a device for ultimate human being. “but these devices, over a period of time, are standing up take demons, ready to devour humanity. Whether they devour or not, they have definitely divided humanity. Unfortunately in a way you can’t unite, at least in the immediate span of time” (Sep 29, 07 The Hindu).

The Battle for Bandh was quoted by TNIE with great hype in four decked hand line on the front page. It marked the usual way of reporting generally with two leads or so. It all began with Battle of Bandh, followed by MUM DAY thus STARTER DAY, SHUNT DAY, satirical note of the observed fast and the bandh of the morning of the bandh day. Which spoke of the Characteristic disillusionment among the various sections of the public with the photograph of Jayalalitha and Mr.Karunanidhi juxtaposed each giving a verdict of their own kind against the court. Mr.Karunanidhi, stating that the adherence to the project for a good cause and the punishing themselves with the observance of a fast would change the situation the AIADMK supreme immediately retaliated that it was the bandh would be a lethal blow or word amount to contempt of court the potty politicians upholding the spirit of the constitution and the court became the hall mark of the news story in the new Indian Express (Oct 1, 07, TNIE). TNIE gave finally reminded the public at large on the thin wafer margin between strike (hartal) and bandh. The strike is directed against a particular institution or organization wherelese the bandh is against general public. The row between the legislature and the court surfaced after a period of lull.(TNIE, oct 1, 07) wherelese the Hindu had pointed out that the Madras high court had come to a prime facie finding that the call given by the political parties was only for the bandh, the Bench said “we are also prima face of the view that the call given by political parties (respondents 3 to 7 the DMK, the congress, the CPI(M), the CPI and the PMK is only for a bandh and not for a hartal or strike quoting its 1998 judgement, it said “there cannot be any doubt that the fundamental rights of the people as a whole cannot be subservient to the claim of fundamental right of an individual or any other section of the people (Oct 1, 2007, The Hindu).

The CPI(M) General Secretary choose to protest the orders of the supreme court which acted on the behest of the BJP and the RSS called of uncalled for “judicial encroachment”. The supreme court cannot issue a blanket ban or strike. The supreme court never interfered with the execution decision but this time of has exceeded to bounds (TNIE, Oct 2, 07). The BJP President Rajnath Sinha demanded the withdrawal of the Union Cabinet Minister B.R.Ballu, for has adverse comments on the judiciary.

Thus the ongoing tussle on the SSCP turned to be wrangle amidst the judiciary and the executive (Oct 2, 2007, TNIE) thus questioning the inaptness of these organs of the government. AIADMK members were against the setup when they quoted that the shops were closed and state transport buses did not run and against the spirit of the supreme court order. Justice the Agarwal has gone to the extent of saying there is complete breakdown of the constitutional machinery of the state, we will recommend the President to dismiss the DMK government in Tamil Nadu”. The judge has asked the counsel for AIADMK if there is case we would not hesitate take to call the DMK Minister and the Chief Secretary to the Court.

Coverage of Different political parties TINE

There were forces disrupting the normal life in Chennai Triruvur, Coimbatore, Bangalore, Trichy, Madurai where stray incidents were reported the congress praised the dissent is fine if law is not violated. As a responsible political party the congress believed that internal observations in the court not reduced to writing in a judicial order, should not be commented upon.

The dropping of the surname became was the next move the BJP President Rajnath Singh aired if Sonia Gandhi failed to believe in Ram Rajya, whole his spiritual vision was Ragupath raghav Rajaram and his last words were ‘Hey Ram’(TNIE, oct 4, 2007). The democratic youth federation of India cadres took out cycle rallies for Sethu project pressing for the early implementation of the Sethu project (The Hindu, Oct 6, 2007). Chief Minister M.Karunanidhi recalled that five years ago, he addressed two letters to then Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee on the issue. While one letter was written in May 2002, another was in October 2002, The Chief Minister statement was issued to the media with copies of his letters in English. It also provided Tamil translation of his first letter.

The first letter tracing the history of the project mentioned how Dravida Munnetra Kalagam has been highlighting the importance of the project for 50 years. Referring to the national environmental engineering research institute being asked to establish techno – economic viability, Mr.Karunanidhi whose party was then in opposition in the state and part of the NDA of the centre had urged Mr.Vajpayee to expedite the study.

The Chief Minister Karunanidhi The New Indian Express quoted that Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK President went in a “damage control mode” to assuage the feelings of the Hindus” (Oct 9, 2007, TNIE). Subramania Swamy needlessly pointed out that the Sethu Samudram project would cost the nation a whopping Rs.1,000 crore a net loss every year. He derided that the recently appointed committee lacked credibility as it comprised those responsible for the earlier decision (Oct 1, 2007, The Hindu). Chief Minister Mr.Karunanidhi said that it was BJP led government that gave the sanction to carry out many of the impact studies in 2001. It was when the BJP was in power that a detailed course was laid down the implementation of the project. Chief Minister Karunanidhi wanted to know whether BJP had not realized has there was Ramar Sethu when it gave the sanction. If the project were implemented

deriving the BJP rule would they have raised the issue of Ramar Sethu? He also detailed the studies carried out during 1860, and explained the sanctions accorded by the BJP regime for the project (Oct 10, 2007, The Hindu).

The New Indian Express (Oct 10, 2007) has gone to the extent of highlighting the usage of the Sethu Samudram project with the implementation of the project with

1. fishing harbours will be set up at Rameswaram and Tondi in Ramanathapuram district .
2. the centre had planned to convert the 114K Madurai – Aruppukottai Thuthukudi road the 188Km Madurai Ramanathapuram – Dhanashkevli into four lane highways at a cost of Rs.650Cr and Rs.900cr respectively.
3. an administrative office for the Sethu Samudram project would be set up adjacent to the colonial Bungalow on the Maudrai – Rameswaram highway near the mandapam refugee camp.
4. A museum will also be set up on a five acre plot in the mandapam camp belonging to the Tanjuvur Tamil University, from where school students and children could have a view of a ship passing through the Sethu Samudram Canal.
5. the Sethu Samudram project the special purpose vehicle for implementing the project had also promised to reclaim the land near Dhaushodi that went undersea after the 1964 Cyclone and hand over the 1875 acres of reclaimed land to Tamil Nadu government (Oct 10, 2007, TNIE). Chief Minister Karunanidhi ensured that the controversy snow balled during Ms.Jayalalitha tenure way back in 1991 when Jayalalitha as the Chief Minister wrote to then Narasimha Rao's government urging him to include the project in the eight plan. In his reply to Ms.Jayalalitha to Ms.Jayalalitha, Rao too expressed his keen interest in the project but did not state that it should be taken up, in view of the Ramar Sethu, Mr.Karunanidhi recalled that when he was the Chief Minister in 1989, he had written to then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on the need for implementing the project (Oct 10, 2007, The Hindu). The committee of eminent person on the Sethu Samudram project will invite objection and suggestions from all concerned, included those who have filed writ petitions in the supreme courts challenging it, besides giving a personal hearing to these filing objections. Even the address where in the objection and suggestions have to be sent were found in the newspaper. The committee will have a personal hearing from October 29 to October 6 (Oct 12, 2007, the Hindu).

Mr.Vardarajan of the CPI(M) criticized the centre for wavering on the issue as the already 60% of the work had been completed. The project would immense benefit to the southern districts (oct 16, 2007, The Hindu).

The project was considered even during the British rule nearly 150 years ago. Later when Kamarajar was the Chief Minister, he discussed the proposed with Nehru, who was the Prime Minister of the country then. Arignar Anna addressed the issue. But in The New Indian Express Jayalalitha has expressed her desire to give up the project as the original estimated cost of the project has grown from Rs.2,400 to Rs.4,000 crore. Even if the project is completed it requires constant dredging that required additional expenditure (oct 18, 2007).

The Indian Express headline ran Karunanidhi appeared to be in damage control mode over his remarks about Lord Rama. But some are in no mood to forget, or forgive and below in bold headline 'RamRap for MK' only goes to tell the pulse of the outraged Hind fanatics and fundamentalists feel that such blasphemous utterances need to be cowed down leaving many more beans to spill. There was also a decision by the Dussehra Committee members in Allahabad referring to Karunanidhi as "today's ravana" and a proposal to burn the Karunanidhi effigy along with that of Ravana to send the message loud and clear that any word against Lord

Rama would not be tolerated at cost. The Committee is currently busy distributing a special booklet to highlight Karunanidhi's observation about the Sethu Samudram project (Oct 19, 2007, TNIE).

The contention of Baalu that 70% of works on Sethu project were over is blatant lie. Contrary to Baalu's claim only 15% of works were completed. According to union Ministry of plan implementation, only 25% of work can be accomplished by 2008. Karunanidhi and Baalu should step down as they have wanted tax payers money (Oct 27, 2007, TNIE). These were the allegations of Ms.Jayalalitha on the claim made by the union Minister Baalu were highlighted through indicators. Union Minister were optimistic of completing the project on time stating that their axis bank had not stopped funding nor the Union Finance Minister the issue of waiver of 12.5% service tax on the project (Oct 27, 2007, The Hindu). Participating in 'Ram Leela' festival Elangovan lately asserted that though thousands dislike Lord Ram, crores worship him. Congress party will always respect that 'majority' public sentiment' (Oct 28, 07, TNIE). The alignment cutting through the land mass of the portion projecting out of the mandepam the only route or alignment stated the Janate dal President Subramaniam Swamy. The choice of the present alignment (which passes through the Adam's bridge) was arbitrary and never recommended by any government, appointed expert committee since 1956 (Oct 31, 07, The Hindu). In the midst of the Ram Sethu controversy, the centre had constituted the committee of eminent persons on Sethu Samudram shipping project to receive opinions and petitions on (SSCP). The committee had announced that all persons interested in SSCP could appear before it and present their views. Though it was dull during a particular period, it became more exciting. The DMK statements wing, students from various colleges in the city 600MTC. Workers belonging to labour progression front affected to DMK, rallied to the office of the committee of the eminent persons (Oct 31, 07 TNIE). The committee is headed by the voice – chancellor of the university of Madras, S.Ramuhend Ram.

COVERAGE OF FEATURES:

The Rama Sethu and the alignment of the channel received much acclaim and flak from politicians media professional, and the public alike. According to Gurumutry Rama was dragged into the streets for street brawl by drawing the debate to slum grade language. Rama and in the Ramayana drank as described by Valmuki was drunkard. But he tried to obviate the fact that Rama. But he declined later owing to the mass disapproval of the fact that he was not drunkard but he drank Samapanam. Those who have read Valmuki's Ramayana in Sanskrit can never admit the fact that he was never a drunkard, but he showed aversion to drinks, by pointing out that he was against the drinking habits of Surgeeva. All this could have been avoided provided Rama was not drawn to the centre of controversy and electoral verdicts. There were suitable quotes of how Mahatma Gandhi adored Rama and was seen as instrument of worship. Dr.Karunanidhi indulged in usual DMK patented anti-Hindu idioms against Rama without understanding their impact in national politics. Future implications of the unfolding drama in the name of Ram and Rama Sethu that he wished to set aside the Ram tirade or the UPA to dumb the DMK or the UPA have fight the next election against Ram himself (Sep 23, 07, The New Indian Express).

With elections on the anvil, the BJP is out to displace, the left and the congress with its brand of Ram Sethu politics. The AIADMK is out on the streets to protest against the sentiments of the Ram Babhts. The New Indian Express stated further if the DMK supporters

have their faith to profess anti-Hindu bastion the BJP and other members have the right to the view of Rama. The DMK's angry that the congress by with drawing the affidavits and promising to review the Sethu Samudram project, has been mindful only about the constituency in the north. Karunanidhi is also miffed that he has not consulted before the congress decided to with draw the affidavit instead of deleting the offending portions.

The BJP members were directly attacked on the issue that the clearance of the project received during the NDA's regime when it is in power as claimed by Shipping Minister T.R.Baalu. When the parliament was attacked no one did resign during the NDA government. But even if before the responsibility was fixed Ambika son was asked to resign. Though she had deleted portions from the affidavit development if was not seriously considered. The clearance had to take place under the law Ministry, their it was given a go by? But no one to talking o flaw Ministry. Election feats was the hard hitting element seemed to loom large in The New Indian Express (Sep 24, 07, The New Indian Express).

Democracy and Secularism are still nascent in the minds of its unwashed millions and pale before faith, what the pillars of democracy – legislature executive and judiciary, that intelligentsia as a class and the media at large should do is to wean away from the peripheral and superficial aspects of faith, and faith based politics through systematic inculcation of the pragmatic approach to diversity and development. The demolition of the Babri majid would have been avoided provided they have the matter of personal faith – inevitably a cultural baggage – only within themselves as a personal matter. This should not be allowed to spell around in public spaces. The High Court Judge pronounced that Bhagaved Gita becomes the Dharma Sastra. Two the globalization means the material and human resource development at a fast pace and turning technology into spiritualism adapt to its need, space and rhythm. It is from this perspective that Ramar Sethu row should be well – understood. It is not a question of faith but of development.

In age of lebensraum religious communities have begun to give up some of their traditional belief systems and related practices and reconcile to the needs of modernity. There are many age old relics, structures in around the country and is arachie as Lord Rama and is only peripheral in the scheme of divine things in modern social settings. For example Christianity adopted burial, but they have begun to cremate for want of space. Some of the middle east countries have not stopped mosque in the way of development.

The ideas of dredging started way back from 1860 if not earlier, which got formally crystallized, but after that 1950 dredging did not materialize. Whether it was matter of faith or feasibility. More over the role of Archaeological Survey of India is being targeted for if is the Geological survey of India which is responsible for the fallout? The dredging started during the NDA government but the sudden love of the BJP led government is being questioned.

The role of judiciary is also been questioned should of stay the petitioned, or should if have dismissed the petitions out right on grounds that in the development project conceived by the executive if will interfere only if there is flagrant interference (Sep 26, 07, TNIE).

The Ram Sethu is a ploy to garner votes and sanctioned by the BJP does not denigrate faith in any manner other than the ecological and economical mater. The feature was worried about on the dithering attitude of the government on retracting the affidavit which and seek three months from the Supreme Court was amended fully by the government baffled many. This stands to tell that this is being done to appease all the minorities. Every kind of wrong signal has been sent out a government, seeking to protect its electoral flank has yielded ground to obscurantist forces in violation of article 51A(a) of the constitution. This enjoins a fundamental

duty on every citizen “to develop the scientific temper, humanism and spirit of inquiry and reform”.

There is more than one Ram temple in Ayodaya, each claiming to be true jammhoomi or birth place of Ram. The UHP and parivar however lies in the middle dome. This narrowly confines the divinity of the omnipresent, innocent, eternal, sublime Ram to finite coordinates shrieking his message and spirit in the process.

If faith and not fact were to guide the nations, it will be ruled only by superstitions and ordeals and several battles have been fought as during reformation and renaissance in Europe to overcome such draw backs (Sep 27, 07, The New Indian Express).

Faith and history cannot be conflated but differences can be conceded and distance can be maintained. Two are not similar and they have different areas of differences and similarities one with deeply held beliefs and the other with historical evidences.

The historicity of the existence of Rama Sethu and the present Sri Lanka has been examined by the feature in The Hindu.

The two important spaced in the Ramayana are Ayodya and Lanka, on the location of which scholarly opinion differs. The location of Lanka for example has been disputed by the historians some have located in the vindyas in Amarkantak or in Chota Nagpar – and others in Mahanadi delta. The identification with the present day Sri Lanka is problematic. The earliest name for Ceylon judging by Indian and Greek and Latin references of the Mauryan and Latin references Mauryan period was Tamraparni (Taprebame in Greek). Asoka in the third century BC in the one of his edicts mentions Tamraparni as one of the frontier. Later, the more commonly used name was sinbala or sinhala duipa (Silam or sieldedib in Greek). It would seem that the name Lanka was a later adoption of the centuries AD.

This becomes puzzling for the historian. If Valmuki was referring to Ceylon, then the name should have been the one by which the Island was known, either Tampaparni or else Sinhala, at the time of composition. But the name used in Lanka, which at this time appears not to have been the name for Ceylon, then perhaps Lanka was located elsewhere. The location Ram Sethu should be reconsidered. This has been suggested by scholars who have argued that the Sethu was more likely located in a small expanse of water in the central India and in the pack straits. Nor is the Sethu referred to in every version of the story. Alternatively if Lanka in the text is a reference to Ceylon, then the composition of the Valmuki poem has to be referred to a later period. When the Island came to be called Lanka.

The Rama is central to variant version of the story is, in itself, not evidence of historicity. If the variants contradict each other as they do, this may create problems for those who believe that once of the variants is true. But multiple variants enrich the interest of historical and comparative analyses in assessing the degree to which each approximates, if at all, to the historical past or what the divergence symbolizes.

The two closest in time to the Valmuki are the Buddhist and jain variants. The Buddhist version in the Dasartha Jataka differs entirely from Valmuki. Rama is the son of the Raja of Varnasi exile is to the Himalaya and there is no kidnapping of Sita by Ravana.

The earliest of many Jain version, the padmacharitha of Vimalsuri, dating to the centuries AD, Contradicts all version and states that it is doing so in order to present the correct version of what happened. It differs substantially from the Valmuki narrative. Ravana is not a demonic villain but a human counter – hero. It presents the story in the conceptual framework.

But this is not the case with Buddha, Mohammed and Jesus Christ. Their biographies begin with a singly story line and this helps to endorse the ‘official’ narrative of their life. Year

after Buddha passed away, king Asoka visited umbani and erected a Pilliar to commemorate the birth Buddha. This is an recorded in an inscription on the Pilliar. But if is true that from the point of view of archaeology and history, the archaeology of India was correct instating that there is no evidence to conclusively prove the historicity of Rama.

There were other questions raised by the feature on the man made structure and the question of belief or faith. Is faith so fragile so as to depend on underwater formation? If there is no under water formation is their no faith. The ecological and the economical damage that can be leave the Coasts of South India and Sri Lanka open to catastrophes, to potential Tsunami in the future? What would be the economic benefits of such a scheme in enhancing communication and exchange? Equally important, one would take to know precisely what role will be played by multinational corporations and their associates in India. Who will finance ad control the various segments of such immense project (Sep 07, The Hindu).

REFERENCE:

Faith Rama Vs faith in Sonia, The New Indian Express, By S. Gurumurthy.

The government and the judiciary. Even though Mr.Karunanidhi observed fast the judiciary ruled out that the bandh was illegal and the Chief Minister began the fast in the morning ended abruptly in the afternoon. But when the court imposed a presidential rule in the state, the Chief Minister left the fast and attended the secretariat. But there were other DMK stalwarts who attacked the judiciary in hammer and tongs.

There were other reasons cited for the entire debacle.

1. Mr.Karunanidhi tactless targeting of Rama himself that has landed the project in distress as in Poseidon adventure.
2. If the affidavit was a goof up and Mr.Karunanidhi's tirade against Rama and Ramayana was the second debacle
3. The UPA effort to mobilize the people through the bandh on October 1, turned out to be third and the worst fiasco.

Arcot Veeraswamy had proclaimed that as long as two women, Sonia Gandhi and Pratiba Patel held their positions, on one could dismiss the DMK government. It is several Criticized for those who repose faith in Rama and the court, but the rationalist DMK seems to repose faith in Sonia (rend rome?) and Patil (The New Indian Express Oct 3, 2007).

REFERENCE:

Shades of Veeranam in Sethu? By WG.CDR.K.Parthasarathi, Oct 3, 2007.

Is SSCP going to be an international sea route like the suez / Panama Canal? The depth of the Canal being dredged is 40ft(13m) for 75km (half the length of the canal) under the water without banks. Can the ships more than 35,000 DWT go through this canal? Ships plying in the international routes are normally 100000DWT and more and not less 60000DWT. Can these ships use SSCP? Ships plying on international routes sail at a speed of 14 to 18knots. pilot and additional marine charges can the speed of ships going through SSCP be more than seven knots?

These ships are required to embark a pilot. Are they not required to pay pilot age and additional marine charges take for the usage of tugs? No official document to date has indicated the rate to be levied for a pilot and additional marine charges.

With a low transit speed 6 – 8 knots (50% of the speed on any international route) can the saving of sailing time be more than four hours? Does those make any sense to vessels sailing for

weeks and months? The Bay of Bengal is a rough sea and the Gulf of Mannar is a calm one. During the Monsoon season there will be heavy sitting which will cause loss of depth below 40 feet. Can the canal be used during those four months. Is dredging possible during the Monsoon? Will there be any revenue from the canal in the Monsoon months where there is no dredging and sitting is high? Therefore, it cannot serve as an international sea route.

With all the constraints, will the revenue from the shops using this canal (of course below 35,000 DWT) be sufficient for an economically viable operation? This is a vital question to be addressed by the pseudo – secularists DPA politicians.

Can the Indian Navy which sails in formation use the canal which is 1000 feet (300m) wide and depth only 40 feet? As the role of Eastern and western fleets is well defined, where there is the need to use the canal?

In the event of Indian Navy using this canal, it is chose to LTTE sea hide outs. LTTE may create problems as they did during the IPKF operations just a few years ago this area was declared a special biosphere park for conservation by T.R.Baalu himself. Will not the millions of cubic feet of under sea minerals and chemical wealth scooped out permanently disturb this special biosphere park?

What will be the effect of millions of cubic feet of sea wealth scooped out on the lives of rare living beings in the seas in these areas and how is it going to affect the livelihood of people both in Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka?

Since only ships under 35, 000 DWT can operate this canal can be used only to brig coal to the Tuticorin thermal station. Should we spend Rs.4,000 crore (The project escalated cost today according to media reports) to bring coal to Tuticorin thermal station?

As the canal will function as a funnel under water between Bay of Bengal and Mannar Bay what will be its effect on biological / ecological aspects when the ocean currents are normal and during under – water Earthquakes and Tsunamis and the implications for Tuticorin and Rameswaram. Have the ocean graphers and geologists studied this vital implications?

The feature going an elaborate account of the project is also found with so many gray areas which is left to the DPA and the geologists and the oceanographic alike to ponder on (Oct 3, 2007, The New Indian Express).

However the story of Rama is seen with mixed irony and denunciation and has asked mockingly whether Rama was certified Civil Engineer to have build the bridge across the sea. Mr.Karunanidhi is not a thoughtless politician and these acts must be driven by deeper motives. The feature seemed to explore those mocking statements which added more grist to the mill. Thus outweighing the contextual reference to his remarks. But it did back for as indeed has happened in provocative violence and counter – violence in Tamil Nadu and else where.

There will never a meeting point when faith is potted against agnosticism and in some instances positive “Scientific” fundamentalism. As kier kegaared once said “The act of faith is often a leap in the void and we believe by the virtue of the abuse”. Later features in The New Indian Express called for the experimental study by the scientists, which should be accepted by believers and non-believers alike (Sep 30, 2007, The New Indian Express).

Coverage of photos by the Hindu

BJP functionaries staging a road rook in Thirunelveli junction cadres blocking traffic near old bus stand in Tuticorin (Sep 13,2007).

BJP and UHC men picketing AHC Road in Dindigul (Sep 13, 2007)

State transport corporation buses purlped at the hosing bus debut after service were suspended following teaching of a bus (Sep 20, 2007)

Tamil Nadu – bound passengers stranded at the Bangalore bus stand after services to the state were suspended (Sep 20, 2007)

ADMK worker being stopped from hurling stones at the BJP office in Chennai (Sep 24, 2007).

DMK supporters who gathered near the BJP office to protest the remarks made against Chief Minister M.Karunanidhi(Sep 24, 2007).

Police removing the effigy of BJP leader L.K.Advani during the DPI stir in Dindigul (Sep 24, 2007).

DMK cadres burning the effigy of Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader and former BJP MP Ram Vilas Vedant in Tiruchi (Sep 24, 07).

BJP members agitating before the municipal office in Dindigul (Sep 26, 07).

Senior BJP leader L.K.Advani and party president Rajnath Singh at the Rashtrajioathi Bhavan after meeting President Prabha Patil to seek action against the DMK government in Tamil Nadu (Sep 28, 07). Only experts should decide on Ramar Sethu: Juggi Vasndew (Sep 29, 07).

Commuters wait in vain for a bus at the Uada Palani terminus in Chennai (Oct 2, 2007).

The central bus stands wears a deserted look in Dindigul (Oct 2, 07). AIADMK cadres staging pretest near the bus depot in Tuticorin (Oct 2, 07)

BJP leaders L.K Advani and Jaswant Singh addressing a press conference in New Delhi (Sep 14, 2007).

BJP leader Venkaiah Naidu destroying a copy of the affidavit filed by the centre on the Ramar Sethu issue near the Chennai collectorate (Sep 15, 2007). Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Mr.Karunanidhi, along with Democratic progressive alliance leaders, on a fast on the Sethu Samudram project in Chennai (Oct 2, 07).

A marine commando of the navy checking the vehicles carrying pilgrims at Dhanuskodi in Rameshwaram Island (Sep 26, 07).

INTERVIEW:

There was only an interview with Chief Minister Karunanidhi in The New Indian Express wherein he expressed the displeasure with coalition government and the wonders that a coalition can work on a coalition he remarked that of was temporary one and not a permanent one. Those who wanted the project are really opposing it. The coalition government's have helped in the growth of Sethu Samudram, the Salem steel plant, Neyveli Lignite Corporation.

Coverage of Photos by TNIE

By the saints of Ayodhya I had simply quoted the religions books and the Bhagwat on the punishment prescribed for blasphemy (Sep 24, 07) DMK cadres burning the effigy of the BJP leader Ram Vilas Vedanti in Coimbatore (Sep 24, 07) Vichuthealai Choruthangai Kathi Volumturs burning VHP leader and former member of parliament Ram Vilas Vedanti in effigy (Sep 24, 07).

There are many hurdles to a good scheme (SSCP), how our efforts to remove the hurdles is failing hindrance. Regretting these obstacles, we have decided to punish ourselves by observing fast – Karunanidhi (Oct 1, 07). Hereafter, no state government can call for a bandh.

The call a bandh itself was contempt of court as the Sethu Samudram matter was subjective. The DPA's fast would also amount to contempt of court Jayalalitha (Oct 1, 2007).

Chief Minister Mr.Karunanidhi during the fast in Chennai to demand early completion of Sethu Samudram project (Oct 3, 07). There was very little time available for taking the information about Supreme Court stay on the bandh to the public as well as workers of political parties (Oct 4, 07). Despite being a rationalist, I have not forgotten to remain impartial (Oct 9, 07).

Coverage of Cartoons:

The mixed response from the public regarding the demolition. Some held the placard to suggest of pulling down the edifice, some save, some protect and some save Sethu.

The Cartoon in the Hindu where in Mrs.Sonia Gandhi drags Manmohan Singh out of the pit dug by ASI to save the government and the coalition from the air surcharged with communal elements (Sep 15, 2007, The Hindu).

The Hindu had taken appropriate measures how overland sentiments are exploited to keep the tempo of the Hinduvata force. The caricature has Mr.Advani where he stands around to see and declare how off it has been caught the imagination of the many (Sep 18, 2007, The Hindu).

The Hindu has taken several measures to strengthen the Sethu Samudram project. The cartoon depicted that several Ministers sitting apart on their rows divided by chasm and several bridges to be constructed so that the gaps can filled up in no time. Sonia Gandhi stands on the pedestal observing what can be done to patch the gaps indicated how coalition partners fall a part at every movement whenever there is an issue that rocks the nation.

The Hindu Cartoon depicted though the BJP had lost the steering and the boat on small mount and two the caricature of two BJP men yelling and on the their hand the congress pouring more water with a Kamadalu on the Sethu issue tells that the BJP had been waiting on its wing to get an opportune moment to drag something it as a controversy (Sep 22, 07, The Hindu).

The Karunanidhi holds a club to beat the politicians about the remarks about Ram ate children and the wife flee shows the dramatic commencement of the rigourness of DMK government and his hard-hitting politics. There was a cartoon in the Hindu which found several people holding different placards with divergent views. There were seven prominent placards with the different themes. The first and foremost said 'save Sethu' followed by 'protect' Don't touch, No, Save, pull down and in the end Demolish. This goes to till that the Adam's bridge should be preserved as a cultural monument (Sep 14, 07, The Hindu).

Sonia Gandhi pulling up Manmohan Singh where the ASI were at work at work goes to till the kind of political practiced by the centre for the appeasement of the minorities (Sep 15, 07, The Hindu).

Mahatma Grindhi perched on a stone declaring Hey Ram Sethu with followers below the uttering Sethu protect yelling and screaming indicated that Ram Rajya as declared by Mahatma has failed to have significance. (Oct 2, 2007, The Hindu)

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