PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF COASTAL KARNATAKA
AS HIGH LIGHTED BY PRESS
Problems and Prospects as highlighted by Press.

Konkan Railway

Whether or not it is an election promise, Railway Minister Dandavate's statement that work on the Konkan railway will 'definitely' begin this year itself will be welcomed. The west coast railway, which will provide a direct link between Bombay and Kanyakumari, is proposed to be completed in three stages by 1985 at a cost of Rs. 238 crores. Mr. Dandavate's concern for the development of the Konkan railway, a major portion of which will lie in Maharashtra, is understandable. In fact, he is only following up a move initiated by Mr. T. A. Pai as Railway Minister, whose interest in the economic development of the Konkan region was no less evident, as he also hailed from the area. The Konkan railway scheme was first mooted as a drought relief measure to provide work to thousands of affected people in the area. The possibilities of economic development of the entire hinterland point to the railway being economically viable also in course of time. As the Minister has pointed out, a recent survey of the region has indicated a return of 18 per cent on per cent expenditure and not 8.48 per cent as originally computed. If the State Governments concerned gave lands free to lay down the tracks, it is claimed the railway would effect a saving of Rs. one lakh per kilometer.

Unlike in the east coast, construction of the railway along the west coast poses a number of engineering problems. First, there are a number of west-flowing rivers which have to be bridged, second, the width of the terrain along the coast is so narrow that the rail track will be close to the Arabian Sea, so much so there is the danger of damage being caused to the railway due to heavy rains and other ravages of nature. Moreover, the formidable Western Ghats present a tremendous problem in linking the towns along the railway with the hinterland by all-weather ghats roads to facilitate easy and quick movement of goods traffic to ports served by the railway. Coastal shipping being uncertain, especially during the monsoons, the west coast railway will be able to share much of the goods traffic flowing from Bombay to the south, which is now handled by road transport. The Konkan railway may well turn out to be a prestigious rail link between the North and the South, bringing immense economic benefits to the coastal region and promoting the development of a very backward region.

Tourist hotel planned at Karwar

From Our Correspondent

KARWAR, Jan. 17—Karwar with its beautiful and extensive beaches would be developed as a tourist centre. Mr. M. D. Maruputtanna, Managing Director of the State Tourism Development Corporation told pressmen here on Monday.

A tourist hotel with beach cottages would shortly be put up on the beach on two government plots one of five acres near the fishermen's huts and the other of two acres adjoining the Marine Biology Centre of the Karnataka University, he said.

He added that a tourist hotel would also be put up at Gokarna.

Mr. Maruputtanna, accompanied by Messrs. U. S. K. Kothi, North Karnataka District Publicity Officer, Y. Devaram, Assistant Director of Town Planning, B. B. Muddavadi, Headquartesr Assistant to the Deputy Commissioner, N. V. Madani, Assistant Engineer, Laxminarayana, Junior Engineer took possession round the sites of the proposed hotel and cottages.

Mr. Maruputtanna also visited the Binnage beach where he was received by Mr. C. N. Naik, freedom fighter and former Headmaster of New High School, who took him round his plots on the beach where he has planned to put up tourist cottages.

The Binnage beach facing the Anjadeev Island was a great tourist attraction, he said and added that the Corporation would request the Government to reserve it for the development of tourism.
Central aid to build river 'spurs' sought

By A Staff Reporter

BANGALORE, Oct 16

The State Government has sought Central aid of Rs 40 lakhs to construct "spurs" across the Gurpur and Netravathy rivers in South Kanara which will lead to some permanent solution to the fishermen's problems caused by the deposition of sand in the sea.

Mr Rajavarman, Minister of State for Fisheries, who disclosed this to newsmen here today, said the Government had also asked the Karnataka Engineering Research Station at the KRS, to explore a lasting solution to this problem.

PERMANENT SOLUTION

Such deposition of sand in the sea had resulted in the capsizing of fishing boats leading to death and misery for fishermen. The fishermen had threatened to launch an agitation if the Government did not find a solution to this problem by November 15.

Mr Rajavarman pointed out that this problem was due to non-desilting for over two decades. But the Government was now making every effort to find a suitable dredger for desilting.

It had called for tenders from private firms for undertaking desilting with a suitable dredger and November 15 was the last date for receipt of tenders. Mr Rajavarman hoped that the fishermen would appreciate the efforts being made by the Government, and would not resort to extreme step.

The Government had paid a compensation of Rs 4,000 each to the 11 families of fishermen who were killed in the boat capsizes due to non-desilting. This dredging operation would cost nearly Rs 80 lakhs but there was no guarantee that the deposition of sand would not recur after the operation was completed, he said.

The Government wanted to bring in two legislations to regulate fishing harbours and fishing, he said. It would soon take a decision to give effect to the Government commitment on giving subsidy worth Rs one crore on diesel used by fishing boats, he said.

Chief Minister Ramakrishna Hegde would inaugurate in January next the Karwar port which had been made an all-weather one. The port had provision for berthing of two ships with the completion of the Rs six crore first stage of making Karwar an all-weather port.

Stage would mark the beginning of ship service between Karwar and Bombay.

There was also a proposal to convert the old Mangalore port into all-weather one with 50 per cent of funds coming from the Centre. The State Government had met the entire expenditure of converting the Karwar port into all-weather one.

FFDA SCHEME

The Government would extend the operation of the Fish Farmers' Development Agency (FFDA) to six more districts. Under the scheme, the Government would train the down-trodden among fishermen in fishing operations and give them nets and other components and also to the marketing facilitators. The scheme was already in operation in Mysore and Shimoga districts, and the Government would extend it to Kolaver, Bangalore and Raechur districts with central aid and to Tumkur, Mangalore and Hassan with State assistance.

The fishing harbours at Malpa and Honavar were ready and the work on the Indo-Malay fishing harbour project at Tadri in North Kanara was going on briskly. He added:

SYMPOSIUM ON KARWAR DEVELOPMENT

From Our Correspondent

KARWAR, Oct 15 — A symposium on the development of Karwar port was held at the Devakar House of Commerce, recently, under the joint auspices of the DRDS and the planning forum of the college.

It was intended to create a common platform for the officials and the students to discuss various problems involved in the development activities. Mr Sanjay Das Gupta, Special Deputy Commissioner, speaking on the occasion, Mr Ramsharan Rao, Lead Bank Manager, said that lack of infrastructure facilities, marketing and transportation problems were the factors which contributed to the stagnation of entrepreneurship. He hoped that the newly-commissioned Kali Bridge might bring industrial revolution in the area.

Analyzing the problems of fishermen, the Assistant Director of Fisheries said that rapid mechanization of the fishing industry had failed to raise the standard of living of fishermen. Unless the middlemen and money lenders were eliminated, diversification of funds were curbed and marketing problems were solved, the industry would continue to suffer. He blamed certain bank officials for advancing the loans to fishermen without consulting the department.

Mr Sanjay Das Gupta, Special Deputy Commissioner, said that in spite of the fact that a huge sum of Rs 30-40 lacs were yet to be recovered from them, the Government would extend the benefits of the DRDS and the new Kali Bridge might bring industrial revolution in the area.

The current status of discussions in the symposium were transportation and agriculture. Mr P. R. Karim, Vice-Chancellor of Karnara University, Mr Nalini Desai, Commissioner, and Mr Geeta, Social Welfare, 10 participations.

KARWAR, Oct 16 — A symposium on the Karwar development was held today. The symposium was attended by the officials and students of the college. The symposium was organized to create a common platform for the officials and the students to discuss various problems involved in the development activities. Mr Sanjay Das Gupta, Special Deputy Commissioner, speaking on the occasion, Mr Ramsharan Rao, Lead Bank Manager, said that lack of infrastructure facilities, marketing and transportation problems were the factors which contributed to the stagnation of entrepreneurship. He hoped that the newly-commissioned Kali Bridge might bring industrial revolution in the area.

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Plan for Karwar’s development

From Our Staff Correspondent

KARWAR, July 6 — North Kanara District Employees’ Betterment Association situated at Dandeli has prepared a comprehensive Project Report regarding the integrated development of the district which they termed as economically backward district.

This report has been submitted to the Government, said Mr. D S Naik, association Secretary.

The project report highlights the major problems that have prevented the growth of the district. According to the report the district has been totally neglected when compared with other neighbouring districts and as a result there is a perennial brain drain of the intelligentsia to the other parts of the country. The rich natural resources available in the district have not been utilised at all which otherwise would lead to the growth of so many industries.

The project report has urged the Government to set up as many industrial estates as possible to facilitate the new entrepreneurs to come up.

According to them, at present it is possible to establish estates in Mangalore, Kundapura and Sirur and go ahead for the utilisation of the resources existing in the districts.

The report says there is a need to develop a ship construction yard on Karwar. The Karwar Port must be developed into a major international port along with the laying of the Karwar-Hubli rail link, it is felt. The proposed Konkan rail line is a must, in the view of the upcoming Naval base at Karwar and Atomic energy plant at Kaiga.

The report has suggested to the Government to develop Mallapur-Yellapur road into a national highway in order to relieve the congestion. The road will also become a connecting link to more than 300 villages.

The report says there is a need to build a bridge at present near the Mundol, across the river Sita which will reduce the distance, and give connecting link to 75 villages.

1 The water potentiality in the district, is very great. The Government should chalk out a plan to set up lift irrigation projects along the rivers of Kali, Vennikkal, Gangavesh and Shankara which mainly depend upon rain water, says the report. With regards to the development of agriculture, it is suggested that there is possibility of extensive cultivation in the district if the lands where forests exist, are converted into agricultural lands.

At present there are only 10 per cent of agricultural land and the Government must try to impress the Central Government to lease such land for cultivation in the district.

The report has suggested that in view of the existing mineral wealth in North Kanara, like iron ore, manganese, limestone, granite, bauxite and uranium, there is need to open mines training centre here so that these mineral wealth can be properly exploited. A mineral processing centre could also be established near the mining place, it is felt.

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At present there are only 10 per cent of agricultural land and the Government must try to impress the Central Government to lease such land for cultivation in the district.

The report has suggested that in view of the existing mineral wealth in North Kanara, like iron ore, manganese, limestone, granite, bauxite and uranium, there is need to open mines training centre here so that these mineral wealth can be properly exploited. A mineral processing centre could also be established near the mining place, it is felt.

Apart from these suggestions made in the project report, it is also requested that the district with all its natural beauty spots and historical places must be developed into a tourist centre. Places like Gokarna, Mundargi, Kudremukh, Sirur, Ullal, Udupi and Kundapur deserve all attention, it is added.
Erosion with the onset of the monsoons takes a toll of coconut and other palms at Bengre near Udupi (in photograph) and other places of coastal Karnataka every year. An artificial barrier of boulders erected in some areas have failed to contain the engulfing of coastland by the sea. In some places, erosion has consumed even houses and highways. Contributed by N.A. Madhyastha.
UDUPI. The Malpe port had raised great expectations among the people. However, this fishing harbour which is not yet inaugurated, is facing a 'silent death' at present with unprecedented fish drought hitting the coast, completely paralysing the life of fishermen, who are totally dependent on fish for their daily bread. While the harbour has the capacity of feeding 21 deep sea fishing trawler boats and 46 purse-seine boats, at present not less than 300 trawlers and 80 purse-seine boats are exploiting the sea wealth.

The canning factory at Malpe, the first of its kind in the State, started as early as 1958, symbolised the adventurous spirit of the people of Malpe. Thanks to the wholehearted financial assistance of nationalized and other scheduled banks, country boats gave away to mechanised boats which were able to go to the deep seas for fishing.

More and more people were attracted to this industry. However, the fishing activity received a severe jolt in 1979 when a major fire disaster struck the harbour, completely destroying 214 mechanised boats. But the Reserve Bank of India, Karnataka Fisheries Development Corporation, Industrial Development Bank of India and some nationalized and commercial banks rushed to the help of the victims and saved them from further disaster.

And now, the poor 'catch' of mackerels, sardines and prawns has thrown the fishermen completely out of gear. To add fuel to the fire, the fishermen also face shortage of diesel and sky rocketing prices of purse-seine nylon nets and other important materials.

The fishermen, most of whom belong to the middle class and poor families, are consistently hit by growing unemployment and depression in the industry. These people deserve all encouragement and assistance from the commercial banks.

A silver lining in the otherwise dark future of the fishermen was the recent announcement by Chief Minister Ramakrishna Hegde to consider their problems with greater sympathy.

Two more die

From Our Staff Correspondent

MANGALORE, May 16 — Two more persons have died due to monkey disease in Belthangady Taluk raising the toll to 88 till today. The total number of affected persons is 1,032 according to the District Health Officer.