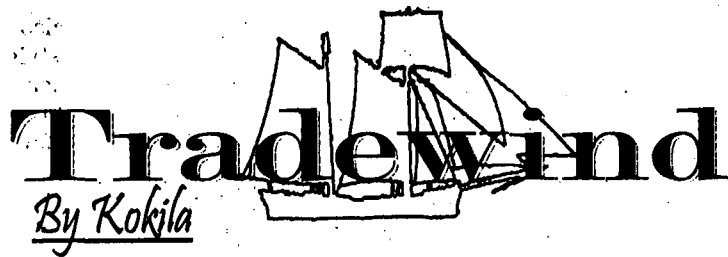


12th Feb. 2007 Island (shipping 03P)

News_MISC_2007-26.pdf

India's Sethu Canal Project – have the Gods struck?



Swami Omkararananda head of Chidbavananda Ashram of Vedapuri filed suit in court claiming that the Adam's Bridge should be preserved as a monument of archeological and religious value.

The bridge has been built by Lord Rama to reach Sri Lanka with his simian to fight Ravana and retrieve his wife Seetha.

As such the bridge is revered by Hindu's all over the world according to the Swami.

The court accordingly had issued notice to the Central Government, Sethu Samudram Project committees and the Archeological Surveys of India. The US space agency NASA had recently come up with some satellite images which confirm the existence of the bridge under the sea.

The opponents have emphasized that the canal project was undertaken without even doing an archeological survey.

Just as the Central Government ignored completely all opposition to the project, the Minister of Shipping inaugurated the dredging of the Adams Bridge on December 11th by firing three gun shots in the air! By this action he not only ignored the opposition from a religious leader but also wounded the religious susceptibilities of several billions of Hindus. This may be worse than the attack on the Golden Temple of the Sikhs on the orders of Indira Gandhi.

Strangely if not mysteriously it is now reported that both the multi million dollar dredger which was sent to dredge the Adams Bridge as

Strangely if not mysteriously it is now reported that both the multi million dollar dredger which was sent to dredge the Adams Bridge as well as a 150 ton floating crane which was sent to pull the dredger have broken down. First the 107 ton driller of the dredger broke while trying to cut the Rama Sethu or Adams Bridge.

well as a 150 ton floating crane which was sent to pull the dredger have broken down.

First the 107 ton driller of the dredger broke while trying to cut the Rama Sethu or Adams Bridge.

The Rama Sethu, it seems is too strong for the cutter, sucker, and dredger. Hence, its spud or the driller broke while drilling the bridge causing a major set back for the project.

According to the engineers who had inspected it is a vertical structure and would be impossible to repair unlike a horizontal fracture.

The repairs by the manufacturer would cost over Rs. 2.5 crores.

That is if the Holland based equipment manufacturer agrees to repair.

In this context it is relevant that the Holland Government refused to provide credit to a dredging company which wanted to make a bid for the drilling work of the canal on the grounds that the canal project would result in irreparable damages to the environment.

An official has said that so far not even a spoon of silt was dredged due to the accident! A giant floating crane that was sent to pull the dredger and retrieve the spud has also broken down and a part of the crane had sunk in the sea. Apparently Minister's three shots in the air have failed to drive the devil.

In a rare twist attributed to the Gods' intervention, the officials are now thinking of bringing another giant crane appropriately named Hanuman to pull the dredger. It has a 200 ton capacity.

While these incidents or accidents may support the Swami's claim in the courts, one wonders whether an addendum is being written to the epic poem Maha Baratha!