

1558 hours

STATEMENT RE: DEVELOPMENT WORKS IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Now, I call the hon. Prime Minister to make a statement.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI H.D. DEVE GONDA): I would like to make the following statement about development works in Kashmir. As hon. Members are aware, the massive unemployment of youth in the State of Kashmir has been a contributory factor in the growth of militancy. Similarly, the State is deficient in power which is an essential infrastructure for development of industry and even for tourism. Government, therefore, proposes to take up some important projects and also to complete the on-going projects on top priority.

Government would be taking up the construction of the 290 km. railway line from Udhampur to Baramulla as a national project to be financed by Government of India outside the Railways' Plan. The project is estimated to cost Rs.2500 crore and would be a great factor in integrating Kashmir with the rest of the country. In addition to providing employment in the State itself, on completion, the rail communication would help in the mobility of people from the State to the rest of the country for employment, education, trade, etc. The survey work from Udhampur to Banihal has already been completed and survey work up to Baramulla will be over by March, 1997. The line would pass via Katra-Riasi-Banihal-Qazigund-Srinagar.

(bbb/1600/rbn-bks)

The Railways would take up the work of construction of the Udhampur-Katra Section immediately, to be completed in four years' time. Government would provide Rs.200 crore for this phase of the work. With adequate funding, the entire line upto Baramulla could be completed in 8-10 years' time.

MUGHAL ROAD

The Jammu-Kashmir National Highway, the only surface link between the Kashmir Valley and Jammu, is at present beset with problems of frequent blockades as a result of landslides and snow avalanches. To provide a

dependable alternative link between the two regions of the State, the Government would take up the Mughal Road Project under the Centrally-Sponsored Scheme of "Roads of Economic Importance". The Project spread over a length of 35 Kms. is estimated to cost Rs.77.40 crore (1994-95 costs). The project cost would be shared between the Centre and the State in the ratio of 58:50. The road joining Jammu to Srinagar - (via) Rajouri-Shopian and Pulwama, and scheduled to be completed in six year's time will generate considerable employment potential along the entire stretch passing through backward areas of the State. When completed, the road apart from generation of economic activities, will help in mitigating the sense of isolation of the people of Kashmir. For speedy execution, it would be entrusted to the Border Roads Organisation.

Hon. Members are aware that work on the Dulhasti Hydro Electric Project (3X130 MW) came to a halt in 1992 with the withdrawal of the French Civil Contractors. An amendment to the overall agreement with the French consortium has been finalised in July 1995. As a result of this, while the machinery is being supplied by the French consortium, the remaining civil works could be taken up by other contractors. Tenders for the balance civil work have been obtained and processed and a decision is expected to be taken shortly by the National Hydro Power Corporation to award the contract. Government would ensure that the civil works are commenced at the earliest and would also see that the funds for the balance civil works would be mobilised through various sources including Governmental assistance and market borrowings.

Hon. Members are aware that another major hydro-electric project, namely, the Uri Hydro Electric Project (4X120 MW) is under construction in the State. The work on this is going on according to schedule and the first unit is likely to be commissioned during this year itself beginning December, 1996. This should provide the much needed relief to the power-starved State.

I have already assured in the very same House that the elections are

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going to be held very soon. I think within a day or two the Election Commission is going to announce the poll dates. That is why I am making this statement. When I went there, almost all the political parties insisted on taking up these works. So, the Government has taken a decision to see that some of these works are taken up in the current year itself.

SHRI SONTOSH NONGMAI DEV (SILCHAR): Sir, we congratulate the hon. Prime Minister for declaring this package. This will go a long way in establishing peace in the State.