

15.85 hrs.

## STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

### Development works in Jammu and Kashmir

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, I call the hon. Prime Minister to make a statement.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA): 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 contributing 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, propose to take up some important projects 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 crores 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 communications 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.

16.00 hrs.

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 cores 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 results 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 85 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 50:50. The road joining Jammu to Srinagar - (via) Rajouri-Shoplan 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 (3 x 130 MW) came to 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 going to be held very soon. I thing within a day or two the Election Commission in going to announce the poll dates. That is why I am making this statements. 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 MOHAN 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.

16.04 hrs.

## INTIMATION REGARDING ARREST AND LODGEMENT OF MEMBER

MR. CHAIRMAN : I have to inform the House that I had received the following fax message dated 22 July, 1996, from the Superintendent of Police, Narsingpur, Madhya Pradesh, Today:-

"I have the honour to inform you that I have found it my duty, in the exercise of my powers under Section 151 of the Cr. P.C. to direct

that Shri Prahlad Singh Patel, Member of the Lok Sabha, be arrested for apprehension of breach of peace.

Shri Prahlad Singh Patel, M.P., was accordingly arrested at 1030 hours on 22 July, 1996 and has been sent to Central Jail, Jabalpur by the Executive Magistrate, Goteagaon."

16.05 hrs.

STATUTORY RESOLUTION RE: DISAPPROVAL  
OF THE BUILDING AND OTHER  
CONSTRUCTION WORKERS THIRD ORDINANCE,  
1996

BUILDING AND OTHER CONSTRUCTION  
WORKERS BILL

STATUTORY RESOLUTION RE: BUILDING AND  
OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKERS WELFARE  
CESS THIRD ORDINANCE, 1996

AND

BUILDING AND OTHER CONSTRUCTION  
WORKERS' WELFARE CESS BILL - CONT.

SHRI ISHWAR PRASANNA HAZARIKA (Tegpur)  
Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise in this august House to support the the Bills, aimed at protecting and promoting the interests and welfare of the toiling million engaged in the construction industry of our country.

16.05 hrs.

(Prof. Rita Verma *in the Chair*)

This is one of the most vital sectors of our economy. As it has already been said in this House, in terms of employment, this sector stands next only to agriculture, providing as it does, jobs to over a crore of people, or as another hon. Member has mentioned, probably about two to three crores of people. But what is more mind-boggling in this particular area is the capital outlay that is envisaged for this sector in our Plans, outside the Plans and also in private sector. I feel that the total amount of capital expenditure defrayed for construction work in our country would annually gross up to something very close to half-a-lakh crores of rupees. This is a very very high figure and it assumes very great significance in the context of the current Bill. Even if 50 per cent of this amount can be covered within the net of the Cess Bill, the annual collection at one per cent, would be of the order of Rs.250 crore to Rs.300 crore. I am sure that this would go a long way in mitigating the hardships of the long suffering teeming millions engaged in this industry.

This industry has its own peculiarities. First comes the non-perennial nature of the projects. Secondly, it is

the migrant character of the labour and also of the employers. Then, it is the non-recognition of the sector as a commodity to be supplied by the contractors. These are the peculiarities of their sector because of which this sector has remained unregulated and unorganised, even our national trade union centres have touched only the fringe of the sector and they are signified largely to the urban areas and the real estate and building business. It is for this reasons that I am happy that the two Ministers in the previous Congress Government made bold to promulgate the two ordinances me that we have, on our Statute Book, for the first time, a law to provide for welfare benefit and protection to the unorganised the construction sector.

These Bills are to replace the corresponding Presidential Ordinances promulgated during the earlier regime making this scheme effective from the 1st of March 1996. It has to be appreciated that the present Government did not have adequate time to fine-tune the Bill or to expand the scope of or to do any serious work on the bills and because of Constitutional compulsion under Article 123, this Bill had to come to this House and within six weeks from the commencement of the Session, the new Bill had to be passed. It is because of this compulsion that this Government, I am sure, in spite of the best of intentions was unable to improve on the provisions of the Bill. But I do not see any reasons that these two Bills should be allowed to lapse.

The construction workers have waited for long three decades for a Bill of this nature to come up. In 1965, the Government of India constituted the Industrial Committee and entrusted to it the responsibility of formulating a comprehensive legislation covering the problems of the construction workers. After this long wait of three decades this Act at least, has come on the Statute Book. Therefore, I feel that instead of throwing them out, we should some how pass both the Bills with all the deficiencies and infirmities notwithstanding.

Legislation of this kind takes time for perfection. What is important for us is to appreciate that certain positive steps have been taken to ameliorate the deplorable conditions in which the construction workers are living. Therefore, we should appreciate the steps and let these Bills be passed and brought into the Statute Book. No purpose will be at this juncture by our indulging in intellectual gymnastics or talking a self-righteous - holier than the pope - attitude in our championship of the cause of the large number of toiling construction workers.

It is true that the scheme for the welfare of the workers as structured under the Bill is replete with infirmities, flaws, deficiencies lacunae and omissions. It is true that it will be difficult to implement the Bill as it stages today. I apprehend that this Bill may become on more labour legislation on paper adorning only the pages of the statute book. But still because it has come,