

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2976
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.12.2023**

RAILWAY NETWORK IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

**2976. SHRI JAMYANG TSERING NAMGYAL:
SHRI BIDYUT BARAN MAHATO:
SHRI JUGAL KISHORE SHARMA:**

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the steps taken to extend the Indian Railways network in Jammu and Kashmir and the manner in which the said expansion is benefiting local communities and businesses ;

(b) whether improved passenger services and facilities introduced by Indian Railways in Jammu and Kashmir is enhancing the travel experience of residents and tourists alike , if so, the details thereof;

(c) the role of the Indian Railways in promoting tourism in Jammu and Kashmir by attracting visitors to the region and boosting its economy;

(d) the measures taken for ensuring safety on railway routes in Jammu and Kashmir for the convenience of passengers;

(e) the details of the progress and current status of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project; and

(f) the details of budget allocated and spent along with the extent of work completed on the said project since its approval?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF RAILWAYS, COMMUNICATIONS AND
ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)

(a) to (f) : A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (f) OF UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2976 BY SHRI JAMYANG TSERING NAMGYAL, SHRI BIDYUT BARAN MAHATO AND SHRI JUGAL KISHORE SHARMA TO BE ANSWERED IN LOK SABHA ON 20.12.2023 REGARDING RAILWAY NETWORK IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

(a) to (f) : The work of the new line in Jammu & Kashmir is being undertaken under Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) Project. Out of the total 272 Km of Udhampur Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link Project (USBRL), 161 KM has already been commissioned. The work of Katra-Banihal(111 km) section has been taken up. Anticipated cost of the project is ₹37,012/- crore, against which, expenditure of ₹34,261/- crore has been incurred up to March, 2023 on the project. An Outlay of ₹5,310 crore has been allocated for the year 2023-24.

The USBRL project is, perhaps, the most difficult new railway line project undertaken in the country post-independence. The terrain passes through young Himalayas, which are full of geological surprises and numerous problems. This section predominantly involves tunnelling i.e. 97.42 Km out of 111 Km (i.e. 87%) of length of Katra-Banihal section is in tunnels and maximum length of tunnel T-49 is 12.77 Km, which will be longest transportation railway tunnel in the country. Railway has made the world's highest Railway Bridge over Chenab river in Reasi District of Jammu & Kashmir. The iconic Chenab Bridge is 1315 m long having Arch span of 467 m and height of 359 m above river bed. Indian Railway's first cable stayed bridge has been constructed over AnjiKhad. Its bridge deck is 331m above the river bed level and height of its Main pylon is 193m.

In addition of above, Final Location Survey (FLS) of following lines have been sanctioned:

- i. Doubling of Baramulla-Banihal section (135.5km)**
- ii. New Line of Baramulla-Uri (50km)**
- iii. New Line of Sopore-Kupwara (33.7km)**
- iv. New Line of Awantipora-Shopian (27.6km)**
- v. New Line of Anantnag-Bijbehara-Pahalgam (77.5km)**

The USBRL Project has made substantial socio-economic contributions to the region, with employment generation being a significant aspect of its impact. The project has generated more than 553 lacs man-days of indirect employment so far.

Another crucial facet of the USBRL Project's socio-economic development efforts has been the construction of over 215 km of approach roads, which include construction of a tunnel and 320 small bridges.

At present, 9 pairs of trains are running over Kashmir valley section due to which travel time of passengers has been reduced and travel experience has also become more comfortable than bus services. The passenger services and facilities are being improved by major redevelopment of Jammu Tawi railway station. To enhance travel experience of passengers, a Vistadome coach is attached to a special train being run over Kashmir Valley. A Guest House operated by Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited is available at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra railway station. Catering services to the passengers travelling in trains are provided through pantry cars /mini pantry, train side vending and static units at en-route stations. In addition to this, passengers also have the facility to order food of their choice through e-catering services which are available at major en- route stations.

To promote rail based tourism, Indian Railways have issued the 'Bharat Gaurav Trains' policy in November' 2021, under which theme based tourist circuit trains are being run with the objective to showcase India's rich cultural heritage and magnificent historical places. As per this policy, service providers have full flexibility to decide the themes/itineraries for operation of Bharat Gaurav tourist circuit trains which may include tourist circuits of any part of India including Jammu and Kashmir based on market demand, commercial viability etc.

In accordance with international norms, adequate safety provisions have been kept in the USBRL project. All tunnels having length more than 2 Km have been provided with mechanical ventilation systems to ensure air quality as per international norms.

Firefighting system comprising of fire hydrants and fire extinguishers, to promptly address and contain potential fire incidents has been provided in all the tunnels. Proper access roads have been constructed to all escape tunnels and adits.

Railway has taken various steps for ensuring safety on Railway routes through safety drives, safety audits, safety inspections, counselling of road user, distributing pamphlets, conducting nukkad natak, safety seminars and sending SMS on the mobile phone of the public regarding awareness about railway safety. Trains plying between Baramulla and Banihal are being escorted by RPF staff.

Annual budget allocation for infrastructure projects and safety works, falling fully/partly in Jammu & Kashmir is as under:-

Period	Budget Outlay	Increase w.r.t. average allocation of 2009-14
2009-14	₹1044 Cr./Yr	-
2023-24	₹ 6003 Cr.	More than 5 times

The completion of any Railway project(s) depends on various factors like quick land acquisition by State Government, forest clearance by officials of forest department, deposition of cost by State Government in Cost sharing projects, shifting of infringing utilities, statutory clearances from various authorities, geological and topographical conditions of area, law and order situation in the area of project(s) site, number of working months in a year for particular project site due to climatic considerations etc.

Various steps being taken by the Government for effective and speedy implementation of rail projects include (i) setting up of Gati Shakti Directorate in the Ministry and Gati Shakti units in field, (ii) prioritisation of projects, (iii) substantial increase in allocation of funds, (iv) delegation of powers at field level, (v) close monitoring of progress of project at various levels (vi) regular follow up with State Governments and concerned authorities for expeditious land acquisition, forestry and Wildlife clearances and for resolving other issues pertaining to projects. The expansion of the rail line in Jammu and Kashmir is benefiting the local community and businesses by improving transportation and connectivity, boosting tourism, and facilitating the movement of goods and services. It's a positive development for the region.
