

Title: Need to provide adequate funds for timely completion of rail-cum-road bridge at Bogibeel over Brahmaputra in Assam besides undertaking simultaneous gauge conversion on Rangia-Morkongchelek Section of N.F. Railways.

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA (LAKHIMPUR): Timely completion of the rail-cum-road bridge at Bogibeel over Brahmaputra in Assam together with simultaneous gauge conversion of Rangia Murkongchelek section of NF Railway deserve priority attention of the Government. On getting required clearances, the foundation stone of this mega bridge project was laid by hon. Prime Minister in early 1997 with a stipulated period for completion within five years. However, targeted completion is deferred, time and again, due to uncertain source of funding. At the present rate of mere budgetary allocation of Rs. 12 crore per year against total outlay of Rs. 1,768 crore, it will require more than 150 years to complete the bridge at the present price level.

I, therefore, urge upon hon. Prime Minister and Minister for Railways to prioritise these works as National projects through a confirmed source of funding either from special budgetary support or as an externally aided project of socio economic importance. This bridge will not only promote faster communication between major parts of upper Assam and Arunachal Pradesh but will also facilitate border trade with South East Asia. Further, it will facilitate construction of several hydropower projects by National Hydro Power Corporation with total capacity of 25,000 MW. Simultaneous gauge conversion of Rangia Markongchelek section is conditionally important to ensure both side rail connectivity to the bridge.