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Title: Need to construct a multi-purpose tunnel across Khardungla linking Nubra valley of Ladakh district, Jammu and Kashmir.

SHRI CHHEWANG THUPSTAN (LADAKH): Sir, through you, I would like to raise a matter of urgent public importance.

The Nubra Valley is strategically the most sensitive and important region of Ladakh District of Jammu and Kashmir State which borders both China and Pakistan including the famous Siachen Glacier. The Nubra Valley is connected to rest of Ladakh by a road-crossing through Khardongla which is considered to be the highest motorable road in the world. The road remains blocked during the winter and early spring due to heavy snowfall and strong wind conditions making the use of the road very dangerous and which often gets blocked and remains so for months together.

It has been the long pending demand of the people of Nubra Valley to construct a multipurpose tunnel across Khardung La which will have this important road link for most period of the year, even during winter. The construction of the tunnel will also help to divert water from north side of Leh Town which faces an acute shortage of irrigation water. Also, the water so diverted could be used for generation of hydroelectricity. Some feasibility study was already carried out and the proposal is pending with the Government.

I would urge upon the Government of India to very kindly consider the construction of a tunnel across Khardung La which will not only ensure road connectivity but will also help generate electricity and provide supplementary water for irrigation to Leh Town. I was personally stuck in Nubra Valley for more than a week during my recent visit. The road was blocked and I had to be airlifted to Chandigarh by a Service aircraft. This tells a very sorry story of our defence preparedness as strategically very important border points like Karakoram and Siachen are not approachable by road hampering defence movements. I hope that the Government of India will take this request with seriousness that it deserves and sanction a multipurpose tunnel to be built across Khardung La.

*m02

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH (UDHAMPUR): Sir, I associate myself with this issue, Sir.

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DR. COL. (RETD.) DHANI RAM SHANDIL (SHIMLA): Sir, I associate myself with this issue.