

[Translation]

Special package for Punjab and J&K

1201. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has announced any special package for the development of Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) No special package for development of Punjab has been announced.

The then Prime Minister made statements in the Parliament on Jammu & Kashmir on 23 July, 1996 and 2nd August, 1996. He further made a statement at Jammu on 14th February 1997. Copies of these statements attached.

Statement

PM's Statement in Parliament on Jammu and Kashmir

As Hon'ble Members are aware, the massive unemployment of youth in the State of Jammu and 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 a top priority.

Government would be taking up the construction of 290 km. railway line from Udhampur to Baramulla as a national project to be financed by Government of India outside the Railway's 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 communications would help in the survey of people from the State to the rest of the country for employment, education and trade. The survey work from Udhampur to Banihal has already been completed and survey work

upto the Baramula will be over by March, 1997. The line would pass via Katra-Riasi-Banihal Qazigund-Srinagar. The Railways would take up the work of construction of Udhampur-Katra Section immediately, to be completed in 4 years time. Government would provide Rs. 200 crore for this phase of the work. With adequate funding the entire line upto Baramula could be completed in 8-10 years time.

Mughal Road Project

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 85 km. is estimated to cost Rs. 77.40 crore (at 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-Shopian and Pulwama and scheduled to be completed in 6 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.

Dulhasti Hydro Electric Project

Hon'ble 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 see that the funds for the balance civil works would be mobilized through various sources including Governmental assistance and market borrowings.

*The Prime Minister, Shri H.D. Deve Godwa's Statement on Jammu and Kashmir in Parliament on July 23, 1996.

Uri Hydro Electric Project

Hon'ble Members are aware that another major hydro-electric project, namely the Uri Hydro Electric Project (4 x 120 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 in December, 1996. This would provide the much needed relief to the power starved State.

(2) STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER ON JAMMU & KASHMIR—2.8.1996

1. Debt relief to small businesses affected by militancy

Hon'ble Members would kindly recall that on 23rd of July, 1996 I made a Statement in the House relating to certain long term infrastructural projects in the sectors of communication and power in the State of Jammu & Kashmir. Hon'ble Members would agree with me that tourism, horticulture and handicrafts form the backbone of the economy of the J&K State. Other activities like small scale trade and industry, transport and hotels subservise the tourism sector. This sector was the worst affected because of militancy during the last 6-7 years. Tourist arrivals in the Valley declined from a peak figure of 7 lakhs in 1986-87 to almost a trickle during the last few years. This has affected the livelihood of thousands of families deriving sustenance from tourism and related activities. The affected units and individuals who had taken commercial loans from banks have not been able to repay the loans since there was no cash flow and have fallen into a debt trap. The State Government have identified that 31,000 borrowers from the sectors of small scale trade and industry, transport, hotel and houseboat businesses took loans to the extent of Rs. 181.87 crores. During the last six years there has been hardly any repayment and the interest on these loans itself amounts for another Rs. 212.79 crores. Hon'ble Members would agree with me that while militancy hindered tourism, loss of tourism led to a great degree of unemployment, and growing employment helped the growth of militancy, setting up a vicious circle. Now that the democratic process is being re-established and all efforts being made to restore normalcy, it is necessary to provide some relief to those hapless victims, especially the smaller borrowers. Government, therefore, proposes to write-off the outstanding loan and interest of all borrowers whose original borrowing is less than or up to Rs. 50,000/-. This

would enable these small borrowers to get fresh loans from the banking sector to restart their businesses. As regards the borrowers above Rs. 50,000/-, an Inter-Ministerial Committee is being constituted to look into the questions of a moratorium and rescheduling of repayments of their loans, reduction in interest rates, and any other reliefs that could be given.

2. Special Central Plan Assistance to J&K State for 1996-97

In view of the precarious resource position of the J&K State, resulting from militancy, the Central Government has been helping the J&K State by providing special Central assistance not only to meet a reasonable Annual Plan step up but also to bridge gaps on the non-plan side. As a result of this effort, the State Government's tottering budget has been stabilised during the last three years. Last year, i.e. 1995-96, the Parliament passed a balanced budget for the State with built-in Central assistance to meet the non-Plan gap so that the approved plan outlay of Rs. 1050 crores could be preserved. In view of the fact that the State for the first time utilised almost entire plan outlay last year, the outlay for the current year has been fixed again at Rs. 1050 crores. However, even with Central assistance at the level of last year, the State budget during the current year has a deficit of Rs. 352 crores on current account, resulting from additional commitments of the State Government on different accounts. Unless this resource gap is bridged by a special Central assistance of an equal amount, the State will have no option but to reduce its plan size to Rs. 698.00 crores. Any reduction in Plan outlay at this crucial juncture when the State is on the path to total normalcy, needs to be avoided. Therefore, the Centre has decided to provide a special Central plan assistance of Rs. 352 crores to balance the State budget during the current year so that the entire plan outlay of Rs. 1050 crores can be utilised for development schemes without having to divert any part of it to meet the non-Plan gap.

3. Improvement of facilities at migrant camps in Jammu

Hon'ble Members are aware that 27,000 families of migrants from the Valley are living in Jammu either on their own arrangements or in camps. The facilities provided at 13 camps in Jammu need to be improved. These relate to provision of sanitation facilities like latrines and bathrooms, construction of more one-room tenement buildings for schools being run in the camps, improvement of drainage facilities in the camps, etc. Government would be providing an additional sum of Rs. 6.6 crores to provide the aforementioned additional facilities in the camps to be completed during the current year.

4. Infrastructure development for tourism in Leh District

While Kashmir Valley is a traditional tourist destination, new tourist areas have come up in the Districts of Jammu, Udhampur, Leh and Kargil. Leh, in particular, has become an important tourist centre and State Government already has a plan for refurbishment of the monuments in the District. To give a further fillip to tourism in the area, I propose to allocate an amount of Rs. 2.40 crores for setting up of a Convention/Conference Centre at Leh.

5. Development of Airport at Kargil

Hon'ble Members are aware that Kargil remains cut off from the rest of the State for seven months in a year as a result of the closure of the Srinagar-Kargil Highway in Winter due to heavy snow at Zojila. Government have, therefore, given high priority to the development of an Airport at Kargil at an estimated cost of Rs. 25 crores. The work has already been assigned to the Border Roads Organisation, which would be completing the work of development of the air-strip in two years' time so that Kargil is ready to take regular commercial services. In the meanwhile, Government proposes to have a weekly helicopter service to Kargil in the Winter months instead of the present arrangement of a fortnightly service. Necessary subsidy would be borne by the Government.

6. Upgradation of Status for Jammu City

There has been a long-standing demand that Jammu City should be given B-2 status. The threshold population for grant of B-2 status is 4 lakh. However, Hon'ble Members are aware that population census could not be held in the State in 1991. The Registrar General of India, however, has estimated the population of Jammu City to be 4.30 lakhs. Therefore, we have decided to upgrade the status of Jammu City to a B-2 City.

7. I hope these measures would go a long way in reviving economic activity in the State. As mentioned by me earlier, travel and tourism trade is of vital importance to the State. Government of India would, in consultation with the State Government, take all necessary measures to provide the requisite infrastructural facilities as well as assistance to individuals and units involved in this trade to ensure that Kashmir gets back its status as a tourists paradise at the earliest.

8. I would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate the Government's commitment to give maximum autonomy to the State. Once an elected Government is in place,

we would hold consultations with them to arrive at a consensus. While doing this, we would also ensure that the aspirations of all regions in the State, namely, Ladakh, Kashmir Valley and Jammu are taken into account.

9. I thank the Hon'ble Members for their support in this regard.

(3) STATEMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AT JAMMU ON 14 FEBRUARY, 1997

Friends,

A popularly elected Government has been installed in Jammu and Kashmir after nearly a decade. I do not have to go through the details of the travails and tribulations, the State and the people have passed through in these years because of the proxy war launched by the neighbour and their agents. There was a massive participation of the people in the polls which were conducted in a very peaceful and orderly manner. The international community has acknowledged the genuineness of the elections. The massive mandate given by the people to this Government imposes a tremendous responsibility on them in meeting the expectations of the people and in reviving the economy of the state. I would like to state very categorically and with conviction that the Government of India and the entire Nation is behind the State and the people of Jammu and Kashmir in this massive endeavour.

2. I have visited Jammu and Kashmir twice before and this is my third visit. I have looked at some of the very important proposals and projects which are vital for the development of the State, but which were not making adequate progress for want of funds. The massive 290 Kms. Udhampur-Baramulla railway line, estimated to cost Rs. 2,500 crores and which can provide large scale employment could not be taken up by the Railways for want of funds. We have decided after reviewing the whole matter, to take this up as a "Project of National Importance" and to provide necessary funds outside the Railway Plan. Work on this project will be simultaneously started from both sides. The Uri Hydro Electric Project which was dedicated to the Nation yesterday, was completed in record time inspite of disturbed conditions in the Valley. We have decided to provide full funds of another Rs. 300 crores to complete the remaining work of the Uri Project. The entire power available from Uri Unit-I will be made available to the State. Another important hydro electric project—the Dul Hasti Project, where work was suspended since 1992 is being revived. We have taken a decision to ensure full funding of the remaining Rs. 3000 crores required for the completion of this major project.

3. In the meanwhile, allocation of power to J&K is being increased to 876 MW to fully meet the power shortage in the State. The State should strengthen the transmission and distribution to utilize this power. We will extend support to the state to exploit its hydel potential through investment Promotion.

4. The State Government have recently presented a Memorandum indicating certain projects and proposals which need to be taken up on a high priority, to put the State economy back on the rails. I and some of my Ministerial colleagues had detailed discussions on these proposals yesterday with the State Cabinet. In principle, I am in full agreement with these priorities and we need to devise ways and means to implement these in a spirit of joint endeavour between the State and the Centre. As you are aware Government is about to finalise the Ninth Plan of the State and we need to incorporate some of these developmental projects in the Ninth Plan of the State and the Centre.

5. We shall devise special funding mechanism including external assistance for implementation of projects such as (a) Protection and Development of Dal and other important lakes, (b) masterplan for control of floods in the valley, and (c) action plan for improving the navigation and environmental aspects of Jhelum on the lines of Ganga Action Plan.

6. The States Annual Plan has reached a record high of Rs. 1250 crores this year. The State Government will be enabled to have a reasonable 9th Five Year. Plan starting with a good annual plan of 1997-98. Necessary Central support will be provided for this purpose so as to ensure that the plan outlay fixed for each year is protected and funds are also made available for meeting the non-plan gap in resources.

7. The demand of the State Government for waiver of Central debt amounting to Rs. 1275 crores would be looked into sympathetically and a decision taken soon. A Central team will be deputed for discussions in this regard with the State Government in the near future. The State will also be assisted in phasing out the chronic overdraft problem.

8. The Central outlay on rural development and basic minimum needs in the State has been enhanced considerably. Nearly Rs. 1500 crores will be provided to the State in the Ninth Plan. The Central Government would provide the requisite additional assistance to restore militant damaged infrastructure.

9. National Highway I-A will be upgraded and strengthened. An outlay of Rs. 140 crores will be made available to Border Roads Organisation to undertake this task.

10. Mughal Road will be taken up and implemented on a priority basis at a cost of Rs. 150 crores, which will be shared equally between the Central Government and State Government.

11. As a special dispensation more towns in J&K will be brought under the Prime Minister's Integrated Poverty Eradication Programme.

12. Orders declaring Jammu as a B-2 Category City will be issued shortly.

13. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research has already sent a high level technical team and in consultation with the State Government, a decision will be taken to start the Agricultural University at Jammu from the next year.

14. Some other proposals of the Memorandum given by the State Government need to be examined in detail in consultation with the respective departments of Government of India and need to be defined. However, I would like to once again state that availability of funds is not the main constraint or the critical issue. What is required is devising carefully worked out programmes and projects and their effective implementation so that the benefits of these programmes and projects reach the people. I would also lay stress on close monitoring of implementation so that the funds allocated are utilised purposefully.

15. There are certain other proposals relating to the facilities to be provided for return of migrants, etc. I am hopeful that the popular Government would be able to initiate proper measures to instill confidence in the migrants as well as take assistance of the local population so that migrants would be able to return to their homes in the Valley at the earliest. I would like to assure that financial constraints would not be allowed to come in the way of implementation of this.

16. The Central Government shares the concern of the State Government regarding provision of employment opportunities for the youth of the State. Special recruitment drives will continue to be made to ensure that youth of this State will be absorbed to the maximum extent possible in Central establishments and even in private sector. However, more thrust has to be given to implement available programmes by encouraging people to take to self-employment. It would also be necessary to devise

new programmes for enhancement and upgradation of traditional skills, undertaking of new technologies, etc. The youth of the State are well known for their marketing and skills in salesmanship. Government would explore possibilities of earmarking some land for the setting up of specialised industrial estates and shopping complexes inside and outside the State to provide self-employment opportunities.

17. However, progress on these fronts would pick up speed as normalcy on the law and order front improves. Some of the discredited elements, are disrupting the economic progress of the State by resorting to *bandhs* and *hartals*. Government cannot allow these activities to go unchecked. Economic progress and peoples well-being cannot be secured unless these activities are squarely faced. In dealing with these elements, it is necessary not only to approach it from the law and order point of view, but also deal with them politically.

18. I want to assure the people of the State that the Centre and State Government are one and will together deal with these special problems of Jammu & Kashmir. I would like to reiterate that this is a national responsibility to bring about resolution as well as reconstruction of the torn economy of the State. This national endeavour should be approached in a non-partisan manner. The entire country is behind you.

Production of Betelnut

1202. SHRI RAMSHETH THAKUR:
SHRI GAURI SHANKER CHATURBHUI
BISEN:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Betelnut Development Scheme is being implemented in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) whether the betelnut gardens have been affected by diseases in the country particularly in Maharashtra;

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government to prevent such diseases;

(e) whether the Government have formulated a time-bound programme to provide relief to the betelnut growers; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SOMPAL):

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) There is only yellow leaf disease common in Kerala and Karnataka and ganoderma disease in Assam. There is no serious disease affecting betelnut gardens in Maharashtra. However, no alarming situation has been reported from any part of the country.

(d) Management practices recommended by Central Plantation Crop Research Institute of Indian Council of Agriculture Research have been advocated to the farmers to control the diseases.

(e) and (f) There is no specific scheme to provide relief to betelnut growers.

[English]

Permanent Membership in UN

1203. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SHINDE:
SHRI RAMA CHANDRA MALLICK:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Russian Prime Minister during his recent New Delhi visit indicated their support for India's claim to permanent membership of the UN Security Council;

(b) if so, in what terms;

(c) the steps taken to promote India's claim, during the past three months; and

(d) the developed and developing nations who have so far extended their support for India's claim?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) The Prime Minister of the Russian Federation during his visit to New Delhi in December 1998 described India as "an influential member of the international community" and "a strong and appropriate candidate" for permanent membership of an expanded UN Security Council.

(c) and (d) India took an active part in the discussions on Security Council restructuring, which took place in