

Governments to the implementing agencies, law and order problem and limitation of technical and professional expertise. In order to expedite their implementation these project are being monitored regularly for their early completion. The State Government have been advised to ensure timely release of funds to the implementing agencies and also review the progress on quarterly basis at the level of Chief Secretary.

Transport and communication problems of NER

3204. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the prime hurdle in the development of the North-Eastern States is the problem of transport and communication;

(b) the extent of emphasis the Central Government is laying on this aspect; and

(c) the details of efforts of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Eleventh Plan document emphasizes connectivity, viz. road, rail, air, inland waterways and telecommunication, as key areas for the development of North Eastern Region. The Eleventh Plan lays special emphasis on the improvement of infrastructure in the region. Details of the efforts made by the Government in the development of transport and communication infrastructure in the region are as under :

Road Connectivity:

Road Transport is a State Subject. It is the responsibility of State Governments to provide efficient, coordinated and economic passenger road transport services to its citizens. Keeping in view the present state of affairs of public transport services in the States, the Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways has drafted a Scheme for providing central assistance to the State Governments including North Eastern States for strengthening public transport systems in the Country. Secondly, Special Accelerated Road Development Programme for North East (SARDP-NE) has been formulated by the Government with the objective to upgrade National Highways connecting State Capitals to 2/4 lane and to provide connectivity of all District Headquarter towns of NER by at least 2-lane NH, State road and GS road. The SARDP-NE programme has been divided into 3 parts i.e. Phase 'A', Phase 'B' and Arunachal Pradesh Package of Roads and Highways. The programme envisages improvement of 9760km of roads as per the details given in the Statement-I (See below).

SARDP-NE Phase 'A' and Arunachal Pradesh Package of Roads and Highways has been approved by the Government for implementation and for Phase 'B' approval for preparation of DPR has been given. So far, estimates for improvement of 1058km. roads at

an estimated cost of Rs.3406 crore has been approved under SARDP-NE. Out of 1058km. approved so far, 450km. length of roads has been completed as on March, 2009 at an expenditure of Rs.1732 crore. With the completion of this programme, all the district headquarters in NE Region will be connected by 2-lane road.

In addition, transport and communication is also a major thrust area of the North Eastern Council (NEC). During Tenth Five Year Plan, about 58% of NEC's budget is allocated to the projects in this sector, *i.e.* Rs.1461.02 crore. During Eleventh Plan period, the emphasis has been given to complete the on-going road projects on priority basis and adequate funds have been earmarked for this purpose. Further, 56 new projects have also been identified by NEC in this sector for implementation during the Eleventh Plan.

Under the Non-lapsable Central Pool of Resources Scheme (NLCPR) of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, more than 35% allocation, *i.e.* Rs.2765 crore has been made so far for 366 projects on roads and bridges.

Rail Connectivity:

For providing rail connectivity to the States in North Eastern Region, 18 projects have been taken up by the Ministry of Railways. Ten number of these projects have already been declared as 'National Projects' with 25% funding by Ministry of Railways Budgetary Support and balance 75% by Ministry of Finance as on additionality. Details of these ongoing railway projects in the North Eastern Region along with status are given in Statement-II (See below).

Air Connectivity:

To improve air connectivity to and within the region, NEC has taken up a project for improvement of existing 10 nos. of airports in NER with the Airport Authority of India (AAI) on 60:40 funding basis between the NEC and the AAI. The airports are Guwahati, Imphal, Dimapur, Tezpur, Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Lilabari, Agartala, Silchar and Shillong (Umroi). Except for Umroi and Dibrugarh, substantial degrees on improvement have been achieved in the cases of the other 8 airports. With the Government of Mizoram, NEC has also funded the improvement of the Lengpui airport near Aizawl in Mizoram. There are proposals for development of three green field airports at Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh), Cheithu (Nagaland) and Pakyong (Sikkim). Construction of greenfield airport at Pakyong, Sikkim has already commenced.

North Eastern Council has been providing viability gap funding to Alliance Air for operating air services within the region. This has been instrumental in increasing intra-region and general connectivity of the region.

Inland Water Transport:

The stretch river Brahmaputra from Dhubri to Sadiya has been declared as a National

Waterway. This waterway connects the North Eastern region of the country with ports of Haldia and Kolkata as well as Bangladesh. Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) develops and maintains waterway related infrastructure namely navigational channels and terminals. The Indo-Bangladesh Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade also provides for connectivity to the region through inland waterways of Bangladesh.

Telecommunication:

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) is continuously developing the telecom infrastructure in North Eastern Region. BSNL's important achievements in the region for the last three years (*i.e.* 2006-07 to 2008-09), are as under:

Sl. No.	Item	Unit	Achievement during the Year		
			2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Net addition in					
1.	Switching Capacity	Lines	4,55,320	4,34,380	422335
2.	Telephone Connection	Nos.	5,41,633	2,88,869	50,481
3.	Broadband Capacity	Ports		62,805	58,985
4.	Broadband Connection	Nos.	5,597	17,294	29,431
5.	VPTs	Nos.	1,702	605	1,405
6.	OFC	RKms	2,056	2,498	2,532

Statement-I

Special Accelerated Road Development Programme for North East (SARDP-NE)

Phase 'A'

Length	2616 km.
Cost	Rs. 16286 crore (Approx.)
GBS	Rs. 5259 crore.
Target for completion	2012-13

Phase 'B'

Length	4825 km.
Cost	Rs. 21094 crore (Tentative)
GBS	Rs. 64 crore.
Target for completion	2015-16

Arunachal Pradesh Package for Roads and Highways

Length	2319 Km.
Cost	Rs. 12513 crore (Tentative)
GBS	Rs. 7069 crore.
Target for completion	2014-15

Statement-II

Ongoing Railway Projects in the North Eastern Region

S. No.	Name of the Project	Kilometre	Status
1	2	3	4
New Line			
1.	Agartala-Sabroom (National Project)	110	Final Location Survey from Agartala to Sabroom completed and land acquisition under process. Project completion target – March, 2014.
2.	Azra-Byrnihat (National Project)	30	Final Location Survey in progress. However survey work suspended in Assam portion due to obstruction by local people. Project target – March, 2014.
3.	Bharabhi – Sairang (National Project)	51.38	Final Location Survey in progress between Km. 0.00 to 9.0 km. Project completion target – March, 2014.
4.	Bogibeel Bridge (National Project)	73	South Bank line on approach (44 km.) completed. Target for road approaches by PWD – March, 2013. Main bridge substructure Target – June, 2012. Main bridge superstructure target – Dec, 2013. Overall project completion Target – March, 2014. Total estimated cost Rs.3087.44 crores. Annual Allocation 2008-09 – Rs.75.00 crore.
5.	Dimapur-Zubza (Kohima) (National Project)	88	Final Location Survey from Km. 0.00 to 40.00 in progress. Final Location Survey was stopped between Km. 5.00 to Km. 8.00 due to objection by villagers. Project target – March, 2015.

1	2	3	4
6.	Dudhnoi-Depa	15.5	Government of Meghalaya has proposed alternative route from Dudhnoi to Mendipathar (19.75 km). FLS for this alignment has been completed. The land papers have been submitted to State Government of Assam and Meghalaya. Joint survey for land acquisition has been completed.
7.	Harmuti-Itanagar	33	The alignment was changed thrice in the past by Government of Arunachal Pradesh and finally it was decided to construct new line from Harmuti to Itanagar only. The final location survey for Harmuti to Naharlagun (21 km.) has been completed. 56.6 hect. out of 150 hect land acquired and 5.40 lac cum of earthwork done out of 40 lac cum, 5 out of 33 minor bridges and substructure of 2 major bridges out of 20 completed. FLS from Naharlagun to Itanagar completed.
8.	Jiribam-Imphal (Tupul) (National Project)	97-9	Final Location Survey, construction work and earthwork and bridges in progress in Km. 0.0 to 20.5 and Km. 63.606 to 97.9. Jiribam-Tupul target-March, 2014 and Tupul-Imphal target – March, 2016.
9.	Kumarghat-Agartala (National Project)	109	Completed and commissioned.
10.	New Maynaguri- Jogighopa	257	Work is planned to be executed in 3 phases viz. New Mainaguri-New Coochbehar, New Coochbehar-Golakganj and Gauripur to Abhaipur. Earthwork and bridges are being progressed in first two phases. 59.25 lac cum earthwork out of 186.77 cum, 139 nos minor bridges out of 307 minor bridges, 43 km. formation out of 236 km. and super structure of 17 and sub structure of 36 out of 58 major bridges completed.
11.	Sivok-Rangpo (National Project)	52.7	Final Location Survey contract awarded and work started. Project completion target – December, 2015.

1	2	3	4
GAUGE CONVERSION			
1.	Katakhal- Bhairabhi	84	<p>Detailed estimate amounting to Rs. 88.70 cr. sanctioned. The work has been planned for completion alongwith gauge conversion of Lumding-Silchar which is targeted by March, 2012.</p> <p>0.50 hact out of 1.0 hact land acquired and for balance proposal submitted to State Govt. Joint verification held and Section IV issued. 13.40 out of 14.4 lac cum earthwork, 151 out of 170 minor bridges, 2 major bridges, 0.87 lac cum out of 1.15 cum ballast collection has been completed. Overall progress 44.60%.</p>
2.	Lumding-Dibrugarh with linked fingers, Haibargaon-Mairabari (44.8 kms.) and Senchoa Jn.-Silghat Town (61.86 km.)	734.65	<p>Lumding-Dibrugarh with linked fingers completed and commissioned.</p> <p>Senchoa-Silghat Town (61.85 Kms) – Commissioned and train introduced on 15.4.09.</p> <p>Haibargaon to Mairabi (44.8 Kms) - Track linking completed. Section opened for ballast train running. Ballasting, lifting and packing of track is in progress. Planned for completion by Dec, 2009.</p>
3.	Lumding-Silchar- Jiribam and Badarpur to Kumarghat (National Project)	367	<p>Works for earthwork, major and minor bridges and ballasting etc. is in progress. Overall physical progress – 43.89%.</p> <p>However, progress is badly affected due to region. Project completion target – March 2012.</p>
4.	New Jalpaiguri-Siliguri-New Bongaigaon branch lines	419.48	<p>New Jalpaiguri-New Bongaigaon (279 Kms) main line and Alipurduar-Bamanhat (75.58 Kms) completed and commissioned. On Fakiragram-Dhubri (66 Kms) including Golakganj-Gauripur section (15 Kms) -6.69 out of 7.54 lac cum earthwork, 11 out of 15 major bridges and 18 out of 26 minor bridges have been completed.</p>

1	2	3	4
5.	Rangia- Murkongselek with linked fingers (National Project)	510.33	Rangia – Rangpara North Section – Works of formation, bridges etc. in progress. Rangapara North to Murkongselek. Tenders invited. Project completion target – March, 2013.
DOUBLING			
1.	New Guwahati- Digaru	29.81	Earthwork and bridge works taken up and targeted for completion by March, 2010.
RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION			
1.	Barauni-Katihar- Guwahati	809	New work included in the Budget 2008-09. Detailed estimate under preparation for sanction.

Infrastructural projects in NER

3205. SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN SINGH: Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the development in infrastructural projects in the North Eastern Region is very low, as compared to other parts of the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the plans of Government for setting up of important infrastructure projects in the North Eastern Region in sectors like power, petroleum, cement, tea, etc. during the next five years?

THE MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) Yes, Sir. Comparatively the development of infrastructure in North Eastern Region had been low.

(b) There have been various reasons for this which, *inter alia*, include remote geographical location, hilly terrain, natural calamities, inadequate technical and professional expertise and weak internal revenue generation capacity for undertaking projects.

(c) To accelerate the pace of infrastructural development in NE Region, Government of India initiated various special measures which will continue for next five years. The North Eastern States, including Sikkim, are covered under the special category State under with their annual plans are funded on 90:10 basis (grant : loan). All the Central Government Ministries, except for those exempted ones, are required to make a provision of and spend at least 10% of their annual plan budget for the North Eastern States, for developmental works including the infrastructure projects. The unspent balance out of this mandatory provision 10% does not lapse