

Government of India
Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region

RAJYA SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 509

To be answered on

Thursday, December 7, 2023/ 16 Agrahayana, 1945 (Saka)

QUESTION

Agartala-Akhaura railway project

509. Dr. Sikander Kumar:

Shri Rakesh Sinha:

Shri Deepak Prakash:

Will the Minister of Development of North Eastern Region be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Agartala-Akhaura railway project is the first railway project between the North Eastern States and Bangladesh;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the role and details of the North Eastern Council (NEC) along with its impact in the development of the North Eastern Region?

ANSWER

The Minister of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region

[Shri G. Kishan Reddy]

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Agartala–Akhaura railway link is a project of immense national importance. Construction of its Indian portion is implemented by Ministry of Railways through M/s Indian Railway Construction Company Limited (IRCON) and funded by Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER). Construction of Bangladesh portion is implemented by Bangladesh Railways and funded by Indian Ministry of External Affairs. The link will provide additional connectivity between India and Bangladesh and encourage trade between the two nations. The alignment of the project has a length of 5.46 km in India & 6.78 km in Bangladesh. Total cost project is Rs.972.52 crore for both the Indian and Bangladesh portion. The cost of the Indian portion is Rs. 580 crore as per initial sanction which has been revised to Rs. 708.73 crore and funds released so far by MDoNER is Rs. 708.73 crore. The cost of the Bangladesh portion

is Rs. 392.52 crore. The rail link was inaugurated by Hon'ble Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh on 1st November, 2023.

(c) The North Eastern Council (NEC) was constituted as a statutory advisory body in 1971 by an Act of Parliament for rapid socio-economic development of North Eastern Region (NER) and functioned as an advisory body till 2002. The NEC (Amendment) Act, 2002 mandated NEC to function as a regional planning body for North Eastern Region. While formulating the regional plans for NER, the Council gives priority to schemes and projects which benefit two or more States.

Since its inception, the NEC has a significantly positive impact in the development of the region. NEC has successfully created many iconic institutions such as Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) at Imphal, North East Police Academy (NEPA) at Shillong, North Eastern Electrical Power Corporation (NEEPCO) Ltd. at Shillong, North Eastern Region Agriculture Marketing Corporation (NERAMAC) at Guwahati, North Eastern Regional Institute of Science & Technology (NERIST) at Itanagar, Regional Dental College at Guwahati, to name a few.

Besides, NEC has created many critical infrastructure assets in the region including 11,432.00 km of roads, power plants worth generation capacity of 694.5 MW, transmission & distribution network of 10,341.63 circuit km, 11 Inter-State Bus Terminuses (ISBTs) and 3 Inter-state Truck Terminus (ISTT), undertaken improvement of infrastructure in 6 major airports of the regions namely, Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Imphal, Umroi and Tezu.

NEC has also been implementing several important Schemes of MDoNER including :

(i) **The Schemes of NEC**, under which more than 1700 projects in agri and allied sector, transport & communication sector, human resource development, bamboo sector, piggery, regional tourism, higher education, tertiary healthcare (including health education) & special interventions in backward areas, science & technology etc. at a total cost of Rs. 12877.90 crore since 2004-05 (upto September, 2023).

(ii) **North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme-Roads(NESIDS-Roads)/North East Road Sector Development Scheme(NERSDS)**, under which a total of 83 road projects costing a total of Rs.3783.69 crore were sanctioned under NESIDS and NERSDS during the period from 2016-17 to 2022-23.
