



Shri Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu, Minister of Railways Lays The Foundation Stone For Five New Halt Stations Between Quazigund-Baramulla

Five New Halt Stations Include Sangdan, Monghall, Ratnipora, Nadigam & Razwan on Baramulla-Qazigund Rail Section

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To cater to the public demand for new halt stations in the Kashmir Valley region, Hon'ble Minister for Railways Shri Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu laid the foundation stone for construction of five new halt stations viz. *Sangdan, Monghall, Ratnipora, Nadigam & Razwan on the Baramulla-Qazigund Rail Section* at a ceremonial program held at Sher-i-Kashmir International, Conference Centre at Srinagar today (29th June 2017) in the august presence of Ms. Mehbooba Mufti, Hon'ble Chief Minister, J&K Dr. Nirmal Kumar Singh, Hon'ble Dy. Chief Minister, J&K and Sh. Nazir Ahmed Laway, Hon'ble Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha were the distinguished guests on the occasion. Shri R.K. Kulshrestha General Manager, Northern Railway and other Senior Railway officials were also present in the function.

The new halt stations between Baramulla-Quazigund stations are: Sangdan (Quazigund-Sadura), Monghall (Sadura-Anantnag), Ratnipora (Awantipura-Kakapora), Nadigam and Razwan stations (Budgam-Mazhom). These halts would cater to the transportation needs of residents living in these areas.

The all-weather special DEMU trains in the Kashmir valley has become a veritable life-line to the residents providing mobility with convenience. On an average 25,000 passengers travel each day in these DEMUs with a corresponding tickets earnings accounting Rs. 3.5 lakh per day.

Background information of Railway Services in Kashmir Valley:

With a view to provide an alternative and a reliable mass transportation system to Jammu & Kashmir, Govt. of India planned a 326 km (later extended to cover 345 km) long Railway Line joining the Kashmir Valley with the Indian Railways network. The Jammu-Udhampur-Katra-Quazigund-Baramulla rail line, a project of great importance for the local populace and the country as a whole, has been declared as "National Project". This project is, perhaps, the most difficult new railway line project undertaken on Indian subcontinent. The terrain passes through the Himalayas, which are young fold mountains full of geographical surprises, high tectonic activity and extremely cold weather conditions.

The completion of Jammu-Udhampur railway link in 2005 spelled the dawn of new era in rail connectivity. The rail line in the Kashmir Valley was constructed in a phased manner with the Railway steadily commissioning rail sections between Anantnag-Mazahom in October 2008, the Mazahom-Baramulla section in February 2009 and the rest 18 km long section between Quazigund-Anantnag in October 2009 thus completing the 119 kilometre Quazigund-Baramulla railway line of the Kashmir Valley. The Railway since then is working steadily to complete the remaining of the 345 km long railway line. The Udhampur-Katra 25 km section was commissioned in July 2014 and the Katra-Banihal 111Km work is in progress (Target: March 2021).

This portion being constructed by Northern Railway, KRCL and IRCON will have 97.34 Km of Tunnels, 27 Major & 10 Minor Bridges and 203 Km of Access road. 45% of the work is complete with an expenditure of 9419 Crore. The USBRL Project is a culmination of a large number of Tunnels and Bridges, one of the most important and challenging being across the deep gorge of Chenab River near Salal Hydro Power Dam. This necessitated the construction of a long span bridge in the Seismic Zone V. The total Length of the 'Chenab Bridge' is 1315 m having a design speed of 100 km and can withstand wind velocity upto 266 Kmph having a life span of 120 years. The Bridge is made up of steel arches and is aesthetically designed using local expertise and construction material. The height of the bridge is 359 m which is about 35 m taller than Eiffel Tower in Paris. When complete this will be the highest railway bridge in the world.

As part of the project to knit the zone of Jammu with the Kashmir valley which is separated through the majestic Pir Panjal mountain range, Indian Railway had earlier constructed the 11.21 Km long 'Tunnel T-80'. This is the longest transportation tunnel in Asia. The existing stations that lie in the Banihal-Baramulla section include Banihal, Shahabad Halt, Qazigund, Sadura, Anantnag, Bijbehara, Panjgam, Awantipora, Kakapora, Pampore, Srinagar, Budgam, Mazhom, Pattan, Hamre, Sopore and Baramulla. 15 pairs of DEMU services ply on the rail section providing all-weather connectivity in this region. Additional DEMUs were introduced in July 2015 and later Fast DEMUs for convenience of office-goers and students were put into service in May 2016 between Banihal-Baramulla and Baramulla-Budgam. Vadi Ki Sair-a Children Special train was introduced between Banihal to Baramulla from 26.11.2016, which now runs on every 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month.

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