

Chenab Railway Bridge and Other Projects Under PMDP

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The world's highest railway bridge over river Chenab in Jammu and Kashmir will be ready by next year, and will connect the valley with the rest of India by train for the first time by 2022.

Chenab Bridge

The bridge, which has a **central span of 467 metres, is being built at a height of 359 metres from the bed level.** The height of Qutub Minar in Delhi is 72 metres and that of the Eiffel Tower in Paris is 324 metres. This is the **tallest railway bridge in the world and the maximum design wind speed for the bridge is 266 kmph.**

The construction work of the bridge was accelerated in the last one year under the direct supervision of the top echelons of the central government. According to the plans, Kashmir will be connected by train by December 2022. The **Udhampur-Katra (25 Km) section, Banihal-Qazigund (18 Km) section and Qazigund-Baramulla (118Km) section have already been commissioned.**

The last remaining section, the 111 km **Katra-Banihal section is currently under execution.** It is targeted for completion in December 2022. The 126 km out of 174 km of tunnels on this section has already been completed. There has been a greater push in the last one year for implementation of various projects under the ₹80,068 crore Prime Minister's Development Package (PMDP) announced in 2015.

PMDP

The package is meant for **strengthening socio-economic**

infrastructure and balanced regional development of Jammu and Kashmir. The programme touches practically every sector and provides for massive investments in basic infrastructure. After the reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019, the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir was left with 54 projects under the PMDP with an outlay of ₹58,627 crore. A total of nine projects with an outlay of ₹21,441 crore were transferred to the UT of Ladakh.

The work in the PMDP since June 2018 and particularly in the last one year has been rapid and unprecedented. The expenditure on various projects, which was 27% of the sanctioned cost in June 2018, has shot up to 54% in July 2020. The number of completed projects and substantially completed projects has correspondingly shot up from seven in June 2018 to 17 in July 2020.

Projects under PMDP:

- The Rambagh flyover in Srinagar was opened for traffic after a delay of over five years.
- The IIT Jammu has started functioning from its own campus and over 2 lakh sq ft area was newly created for it.
- The Srinagar Leh power transmission line and 220 KV Srinagar-Alusteng-Drass-Kargil–Leh power transmission system have also been completed.
- Construction work of AIIMS in Jammu has started. Two years ago, the land for the project had not been handed over and the project was stuck up for want of land and other clearances.
- The semi ring road in Jammu will be completed by next year and all land acquisition and related hurdles have been removed. In this project, 30% of the work has already been completed.
- The 8.45 km new Banihal tunnel will be opened by next year as 86% of the work is completed.
- Work on major roads like Jammu–Akhnoor Road, Chenani-

Sudhmahadev Road has been accelerated.

- Despite having 20,000 MW hydropower potential, Jammu and Kashmir had been able to tap only 3,500 MW in 70 years. In the last two years alone, about 3,000 MW capacity projects were revived and put on track. Work on 1,000 MW Pakal Dul and 624 MW Kiru started and two more projects – 800 MW Ratle and 540 MW Kwar have been put on fast track.