

Speech of His Excellency Shri K.Sankaranarayanan the Governor of Jharkhand on the occasion of inauguration of Ranchi-Howrah-Ranchi Intercity Express on 7th September, 2009 at Ranchi Railway Station.

Union Minister Shri Subodh Kant Sahai, Minister of State for Railways, Shri Mukul Roy, Members of Parliament, Members of State Legislature, other important delegates from Railways, Passenger Associations, Industries, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be present here for the inauguration of Ranchi-Howrah-Ranchi Intercity Express. Better train connectivity between these two capitals as well as commercial centres of East India had been a longstanding demand of the people of Jharkhand, which has now been answered.

Railways are the lifeline of the nation. During pre-independence period growth of Railway network in India was the fore-runner to growth of Indian Nationalism. Post-independence Railways is the central pivot of our transport industry with support from Roadways, Airways and Shipways.

The role of Railways as a catalyst in economic development is universally recognised. The Ministry of Railways assumes a role fanning out basically in three directions. First, as a transporter of freight ranging from bulk commodities as Coal, Iron and Steel, Foodgrains, Fertilizers, Cement and POL products to aggregate commodities moving in containers, the Railways always endeavors to meet the resource -supply constraints of various regions across the country. Secondly, as a massive passenger focus industry, it facilitates the movement of about 15 million passengers on a daily basis. And, last but not the least, it assumes the role of an organisation with a social perspective from time to time meeting the requirements of the nation during times of crisis whether defence related, famine, flood or drought or any other calamity.

Over the years Railways has exponentially expanded not only in terms of numbers but also in terms of the wide range of services and products it delivers to people. An

example of this is Ranchi Division itself, which since its inception in 2003 has seen the number of Mail, Express and Passenger services increasing from 28 to 89.

Notwithstanding the above, rail network in Jharkhand needs to grow further and grow fast since a number of important areas like Hazaribagh and Dumka continue to remain deprived of Rail access. Keeping this in view Jharkhand Govt. had entered into an MOU with the Ministry of Railways in 2002 for execution of six critical projects on cost sharing of two-third and one-third between State Govt. and Railways. None of these projects have yet been completed; further, there have been cost escalations of over 50%. The MOU too has expired and is awaiting the concurrence of the Ministry of Railways. I would, on this occasion, request the Minister Mr. Mukul Roy to put all these incomplete Rail projects of Jharkhand on the fast track of completion and also to revisit the existing cost sharing formula which appears to be inequitable and loaded against the State Govt while deciding on the issue of MOU renewal.

It is gratifying to learn that the Indian Railways, both at Divisional and National level, is striving to enhance the level of services, both in terms of quantity and quality, for the public. The Ranchi-Howrah-Ranchi Intercity Express starting from today is a significant step towards increasing passenger facilitation.

In conclusion, I thank Govt. of India and Ministry of Railways on behalf of people of Jharkhand for this new train service to Howrah and reiterate my request for the expeditiously commissioning of the under construction rail projects in the state so as to meet the aspirations of people of Jharkhand as well as to open new vistas of development for the under-developed regions of the state.

Thank You.