

## **Vice President lays foundation stone of Rangpo- Sevoke rail link**

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**Rangpo, October 30.** The Chief Minister, Mr. Pawan Chamling's dream of linking Sikkim with the rest of the country through railways will be realized in next five years. The Vice President, Mr. Mohammad Hamid Ansari on his final day of his visit to this beautiful Himalayan state laid the foundation stone of Rangpo-Sevoke rail link at Rangpo Mining grouped in presence of Union Railway Minister, Ms. Mamta Banerjee, Governor, Mr. B.P.Singh, Chief Minister, Mr. Pawan Chamling and host of other dignitaries and local gentry.

The construction of new broad gauge railway line between Rangpo and Sevoke was sanctioned in the Railway Budget 2008-09 and this 51 Km line will be constructed by Indian Railway Construction Company Limited (IRCON), a Public Sector Undertaking under Ministry of Railway at an estimated cost Rs. 13339.48 Crores.

In accordance with Railway's policy of providing rail link to all the capitals of the North Eastern states, Railway has carried out a reconnaissance survey to bring Gangtok on the railway map. Another survey to provide rail connectivity from Gangtok to Mirik of Darjeeling District of West Bengal is also in progress.

On this occasion, the Vice President in his short address expressed his happiness to have participated in this historic occasion and termed it as a significant milestone in providing rail connectivity to the state. Establishing rail connectivity would not only lead to further economic development but also increase in the tourist coming to the state, Mr. Ansari stated.

Terming it as a National Project, Union Minister for Railway assured that the rail link will be completed within the stipulated time frame and also thanked the Vice President for being a part of this beautiful project.

The Governor, Mr. B.P. Singh in his address stated that with this rail link, connectivity problem of the state will be solved upto a great extent and also thanked the Vice President and Union Railway Minister for being part of this function.

The Chief Minister on the occasion expressed that this is the red letter day for Sikkim and the Sikkimese people as the dream project that was pursued with the wholehearted support and endorsement of the Central Government has come to a full circle. And the very fact that the Vice President himself has kindly agreed to lay the foundation stone of this Rail link in the august presence of the Governor of Sikkim and Ms. Mamta Banerjee has made this day all the more blessed and exalted, he added.

“This is like stepping towards a new dawn for Sikkim and I would like to share our dream and plan to extend the railway track upto Nathula border post standing at 14,400 feet separating India with Tibet Autonomous Region of China, Therefore, I would like to request the Central Government and Ms. Mamta Banerjee to view this project from a larger and broader perspective. I would also take this opportunity to request the Central Government and Ms. Banerjee to conceive a more comprehensive Master Plan to lay rail line, winding its way across high mountains and natural lakes, our flower gardens and the animal kingdom making it as a recurring theme of our Nation’s Pride both as a communication link and as tourist destination. In the same way, I would like to urge upon the railway authorities to take advantage of the scenic beauty of Sikkim together with its strategic location to create another wonder of the world in the railway history surpassing all past achievements”. Mr. Chamling said.

In the morning, the Vice President M. Hamid Ansari and Mrs. Salma Ansari planted two years old Red Cherry saplings at the Raj Bhawan premises, adjacent to the place where Red Cherry saplings were also planted by the Governor, Mr. Balmiki Prasad Singh and Mrs. Karuna Singh during the World Environment Day this year.

## **Rashtriya Sankalpa Diwas Observed**

**Gangtok October 31:** Erstwhile Prime Minister compared her to goddess “Durga” while journalist, writer and historian Khushwant Singh, once said that Mrs. Indira Gandhi while coming out of her house for her office looked like a knight in a shining armor with the sword held high. Such was the personality of Mrs. Gandhi who was not only the female Prime Minister of the nation till date and political icon but was also considered the iron lady of India.

Sikkim remembered this great leader on the occasion of her death anniversary which is also celebrated as Rashtriya Sankalpa Diwas or National Rededication Day all over the country.

In a function organized at Chintan Bhawna in the capital the Governor, Mr. B.P.Singh, Chief Minister Mr. Pawan Chamling paid their tribute and homage to this great leader.

The Governor, Mr. Singh in his speech remembered Mrs.Gandhi as a leader with vision who ushered India towards the path of progress. He recalled of her fondness of Sikkim and her visit to Sikkim three times before being the Prime Minister and later in 1975 when she was in the helm of affairs of the country.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi showed an ability to win elections and outmaneuver opponents through populism; she also introduced more left-wing economic policies and promoted agricultural productivity, and national nuclear program was started also by her in 1967 in response to the nuclear threat from our neighbors, the Governor added.

While the Chief Minister, Mr. Pawan Chamling in his address opined that hatred is the root cause of all grievous crimes and everyone should try and pull down the walls of hatred and create tranquil and peaceful environment so that one can strive forward towards path of progress.

Addressing the students present on the occasion the Chief Minister urged them to have a sense of competitiveness in them, which seem to be lacking in today's youth.

Students should come forward to build the nation as well as the state with their positive thinking and productive actions, he added. The world class opportunities which are here in the doorsteps should be utilized and the peaceful and tranquil environment the government has provided should be valued, Mr. Chamling stressed.

Earlier students from Sir Tashi Namgyal Senior Secondary School and Middle Camp Secondary school presented patriotic songs and priest from various religions offered prayers.

Similarly, in west district, D.C. (W), Mr. Santa Pradhan administered the oath of non-violence and were attended by all the department heads and staff of west district.