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## AJK PM lays foundation stone of Asia's longest Rs. 10 billion Mirpur-Islamgarh bridge, over Mangla dam reservoir, completion project:



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Altaf Hamid Rao.

MIRPUR (AJK): Oct. 21: Azad Jammu Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq on

Monday laid foundation stone of Rs. 10 billion mega project of the completion of 7181 meter long

Rathoa Haryam Mirpur-Islamgarh bridge over Mangla dam reservoir.

Our Special Jammu Kashmir state Correspondent Altaf Hamid Rao reports from Mirpur that while addressing the ceremony held at the adjoining Islamgarh town, the AJK Prime Minister said that with the liberal financial assistance of the government of Pakistan under the already completed Mangla dam raising project, the construction work of the Rathaua Haryam Bridge completion project has been awarded to Pakistan's well reputed Frontier Works Organisation (FWO). He underlined that the project, originally valued of Rs 17 billion, will be completed at a cost of Rs 10 billion.

Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq formally awarded the work order of construction contract to FWO officials on this occasion.

Housing and Physical Planning Minister Chaudhry Yasar Sultan Project Director Rathaua Haryana Bridge Habib Mugha and others also addressed the ceremony.

The AJK Prime Minister asserted that practical actions, rather than false claims, are being taken by his government for the rehabilitation of Mangla Dam affectees under a broad-based program in Mirpur district of AJK, holding the country's second largest reservoir - the Mangla dam.

According to the research conducted by this Correspondent, Mirpur-Islamgarh bridge over Mangla dam to bridge Mirpur city with adjoining densely populated Islamgarh town is considered

to be the longest bridge over any reservoir in any country in South Asian region.

A major portion of the 7181-meter long mostly RCC bridge has already been completed so far under the Mangla dam raising project with the liberal financial support of the government of Pakistan which had accorded formal approval for completion of the project allocating required funds for completion of the mega project.

It will be the longest bridge in Asia, authorities here asserted.

Unveiling the salient features of the gigantic project, the sources close to Mangla Dam Affairs told APP here on Monday that the government had allocated funds for the first phase of the 7181-meter long bridge.

The initial construction work on the project was executed after the National Economic Coordination Committee (ECNEC) of the federal government had formally approved the project.

The project was targeted to be completed within three-years stipulated period, the sources said.

Elaborating the salient features of the project, the source further said that the Rathua-Harriyam bridge would be the longest ever bridge and be the first of its own kind not only in Azad Jammu Kashmir but also in entire South Asia.

The bridge will not only reduce the already-long uneven road link between Mirpur city and Islamgarh town to an unprecedented extent but would also reduce the traveling time for the commuters traveling between district headquarters of Mirpur and Kotli and between Mirpur and Dadayal sub division to a greater extent coupled with safe and comfortable traveling facilities. The construction of bridge over the picturesque Mangla Dam reservoir, surrounded by the lush-green hills, will open new vistas for the promotion of tourism industry not only in this district but also in other parts of Mirpur division, the sources said.

The process for implementation of the development package for the resettlement of the additional families of the affectees of the already completed Mangla dam raising project has been geared up under an integrated plan to ensure its completion within the stipulated time-frame by the state government.

It may be added that the process of payment of compensation to the old and new Mangla dam affectees has been completed and a total of Rs. 56 billion have yet been spent for resettlement and rehabilitation of the affected families of the Mangla dam raising project.