

BRO CONNECTS KASOWAL ENCLAVE TO THE MAINLAND PERMANENTLY



On 20th April 2020 the Kasowal enclave in Punjab got connected permanently to the mainland when Border Roads Organisation (BRO) opened the Kasowal Bridge much ahead of schedule.

The Kasowal Enclave of approx 35 sq Km had so far been connected to the rest of India by a Pontoon Bridge of limited load capacity. This Pontoon Bridge is dismantled every year prior to the monsoons, as it would or else get washed away in the flow of the Ravi River in monsoons. This meant thousands of acres of fertile land across the River could not be utilized by the farmers in monsoons. The local population and the Army (by virtue of the sensitivity of the enclave) required a Class 70 permanent Bridge to give all weather connectivity to Kasowal enclave. BRO conceived and planned for a 484 meter long permanent bridge.

The 484 meter Kasowal Bridge connecting Kasowal enclave with the rest of India was built by 141 Drain Maintenance Coy of 49 Border Roads Task Force (BRTF) of Project Chetak of BRO. The Bridge costing 1789 lacs excluding the approaches, consists of 16 cells of 30.25 mtr length each.

BRO had planned to open the Kasowal Bridge in time for Vaisakhi, so that farmers could transport their harvest to the market comfortably. The

last cell i.e. 16th Cell Division was completed on the 15th Mar 2020 and construction of protective works was under progress when work came to a halt on March 23 due to the Covid-19 lockdown. To ensure locals do not suffer during the harvest season and also to ensure the bridge does not get damaged because of the heavy discharge of water and the tendency of the river to change course in the monsoons, BRO approached the Punjab government and Gurdaspur district administration to continue the work.

On April 3, BRO officials wrote to the District Commissioner Gurdasopur, seeking permission to resume construction works on Kasowal Bridge. On April 10, Lt Gen Harpal Singh, Director General Border Roads discussed the matter with the Punjab government, and on April 11 the SDM Dera Baba Nanak gave his nod to proceed with the work. The work resumed on 13th April 2020 after getting required permission from district administration. The BRO teams continued the work with all necessary COVID – 19 precautions.

On 16th April Shri Gurjit Singh Ahluwalia. Hon'ble MP Amritsar approached BRO authorities to provide connectivity to the local farmers for 20 days so that they can transport their crop from enclave to mandies. To facilitate the shifting of crops all available resources were diverted and approach work of far bank completed in two days. On the first Monday after Vaisakhi the bridge was opened for the farmers who transported their harvests on tractor to the market.