

## COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

### **Petition praying for development of Railway network in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and other Himalayan States.**

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The Committee on Petitions of the Rajya Sabha, under the Chairmanship of **Shri Bhagat Singh Koshyari, Member, Rajya Sabha**, is considering a petition praying for development of Railway network in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and other Himalayan States. The petitioners have contended that there is an urgent need for development of railway network in the Border States of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Sikkim, which would benefit these States in terms of their economy and tourism. They have also contended that the existing network is a legacy of the British period and no tangible development has been done since independence. This is in stark contrast to the development of large railway network by China in areas adjoining Indian Border States.

2. The petition, accordingly, aims to highlight the need for strengthening of railway network in these States and also prays for declaration of projects for development of railway network in the Himalayan States as 'National Projects'.

3. The petition is available on the Rajya Sabha's website ([www.rajyasabha.nic.in](http://www.rajyasabha.nic.in)) under the link: *Committees* → *Standing Committees* → *Committee on Petitions* → *Petitions with the Committee*.

4. The Committee has decided to undertake consultations with a wide cross-section of the society and invites written memoranda thereon. Those desirous of submitting memoranda to the Committee may send two copies (each in English and Hindi) thereof to **Shri Rakesh Naithani, Joint Director, Rajya Sabha Secretariat, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi – 110 001 (Tel: 011-23035433(O), 23794328 (Telefax) and E-mail: [rsc2pet@sansad.nic.in](mailto:rsc2pet@sansad.nic.in))** latest by **30<sup>th</sup> December, 2010**.

5. Comments/suggestions, etc. submitted to the Committee would form part of its record and would be treated as confidential. Any violation in this regard may attract breach of privilege of the Committee.

6. Those who are willing to appear before the Committee besides submitting written comments/suggestions may indicate so. However, the Committee's decision in this regard shall be final.

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To

**The Council of States (Rajya Sabha)  
Parliament of India.**

**Petition of Shri Kedar Singh Fonia, MLA, Uttarakhand  
Shri Chandan Ram Das, MLA  
Shri Khajan Das, MLA  
Shri Gopal Singh Rawat, MLA  
Shri Laxman Singh Patwal, MLA  
Shri Vijay Bahuguna, M.P., Lok Sabha and  
Shri K.C. Singh Baba, M.P., Lok Sabha  
For development of railway network in Uttarakhand,  
Himachal Pradesh and other Himalayan states bordering China.**

### **Sheweth**

The Himalayan states are the guardians of the country's borders and contribute largely to conservation of its environment as well as security. To strengthen the security network in the Western Himalayas, there is a strong need for development of railway network. Such a rail network would not only benefit the states through which it passes in terms of economy and tourism but would facilitate fast movement of men and material in times of natural calamity and meet defense needs.

#### *Transportation needs in Himalayan States*

2. The Himalayan states present a dismal picture in terms of transportation networks. This region has the lowest road and railway density in the country. The mode of transport and communication are not developed to the desired level resulting in lack of economic and industrial development of this region. Inadequate road and rail links have left many areas inaccessible and their great potential in forest products, cash crops, hydropower, animal husbandry and tourism remain unexploited. Railways being the principal mode of transport in the country can act as catalyst for socio-economic development of this region. Although difficult terrain, severe climatic conditions and sparse population are often cited as reasons for the apparent lack of interest in constructing roads and railway network, short sighted government policies have also equally contributed to the poor development of infrastructure in the region.

#### *Position of Railway network*

3. The British left behind a track lane of 55596 km, in 62 years since independence the total railway track stands at 63,940 km. This work around addition of 130km in a year which is very pathetic. The situation in Himalayan states is even

worse as not even a single Kilometer has been added there since independence. Almost all the network existing in this region is a legacy of British period. The major initiatives of Indian Railways since independence are the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla railway line in J&K and railway line connecting Sevoke in west Bengal to Rangpo in Sikkim.

#### *Development of railroad network by china on Indian border*

4. China has completed its 3,900-km Beijing-Lhasa rail link and is pushing ahead with seven other railroad projects adjoining the Indian border. China proposes to build 5,000 km of rail links, with emphasis on establishing connectivity in the Tibetan Autonomous Region. The country has also proposed to build a rail network in Nepal. Besides this, China is said to be considering an extension of the Golmu-Lhasa line up to Xigaze, south of Lhasa and from there to Yatung, a trading center, barely a few kilometers from Nathu La, a mountain pass that connects Tibet with Sikkim. There is a proposal too to extend the line to Nyingchi, an important trading town north of Arunachal Pradesh, at the trijunction with Myanmar. These rail lines will bring Chinese trains up to Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh - two Indian states that figure prominently on the radar of Sino-Indian disputes.

#### *Need for Indian initiatives for development of railway network*

5. Economists and security experts have been warning that Indian Government is napping while China is set to extend its railway network upto the Sino-Indian border. India's rail network is the world's most extensive but it does not penetrate the border-states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. Although the feasibility of some rail links is being studied, some projects have been sanctioned and others are being executed by Indian Railway, their completion targets may prove fickle, if the experience of the strife-torn states of Jammu and Kashmir and Manipur is any guide. Trains were supposed to be running in the Kashmir Valley by last August, but that now looks unlikely to happen for another five years at least. Indian Railways' officials blame difficult mountainous terrain for the delay in projects. About 120 Kilometer of the 292 kilometer Kashmir railway line consists of tunnels; delaying matters further, several are reported to have collapsed during construction. Yet, the much longer Golmud-Lhasa rail runs through far more treacherous terrain and climatic conditions and was completed on time.

#### *Local demands for railway lines*

6. Social organizations, MPs, MLAs and state governments of these states have since long been raising the issue of discrimination and step-motherly treatment in terms of expansion of railway network by successive governments in this region. Some specific demands from different states is as under:-

(a) Himachal Pradesh

(i) Bhanupalli-Bilaspur-Beri;

- (ii) Ghanauli-Baddi;
- (iii) Nangal-Talwara; and
- (iv) Bilaspur-Manali-Leh.

(b) Uttarakhand

- (i) Rishikesh - Karnaprayag;
- (ii) Tanakpur - Ghat - Bageshwar;
- (iii) Dehradun - Kalsi;
- (iv) Ram Nagar - Chaukhutiya;
- (v) Haridwar - Kotdwar - Ramnagar - Kathgodam; and
- (vi) Rishikesh - Dehradun.

(c) Arunachal Pradesh

- (i) Hirimati - Itanagar; and
- (ii) Rupai - Parasuramkund.

(d) Jammu and Kashmir

Jammu - Rajauri - Poonch.

(e) Sikkim

- (i) Mirik - Gangtok; and
- (ii) Extension of Sevoke - Rangpu line upto Gangtok

7. Unless there is an expansion of Railway network and Himalayan States are linked with better rail infrastructure, the industrialization and economic development cannot take place desire level. It is, therefore, prayed that the Ministry of Railways should declare projects for development of railway network in Himalayan States as National Projects and initiate work on above mentioned railway lines on priority.

S.N.	Name	Address	Signature
1.	Kedar Singh Fonai, MLA, Badrinath	D-9, Nehru Colony, Dehradun.	<i>Sd/-</i>
2.	Chandan Ram Das, MLA	Village & PO Bageshwar	<i>Sd/-</i>
3.	Khajan Das, MLA	Village Age, PO Sreehare, Tehri Garhwal	<i>Sd/-</i>
4.	Gopal Singh Rawat, MLA	Old Kachhari Road, Uttarkashi	<i>Sd/-</i>
5.	Laxman Singh Patwal, MLA	3, H.C.M. New Delhi	<i>Sd/-</i>
6.	Shri Vijay Bahuguna, M.P.	4 Mahadev Road, New Delhi	<i>Sd/-</i>
7.	Shri K.C. Singh Baba, M.P.	Dubnani Foundation, C2/92, Sector 36, Noida	<i>Sd/-</i>