

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
**MINISTRY OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION**

**DELHI STATEMENT ON RAIL CONNECTIVITY IN THE NORTH-EAST REGION**

The 6<sup>th</sup> North-East Sectoral Summit on Rail Connectivity noted that only 4% of India's railway network is located in the North-East. At the same time, the Summit also noted that the Ministry of Railways has not only consistently spent over 10% of its Gross Budgetary Support (GBS) in the North-East but it has been increasing year over year and it has reached almost 15% of GBS. Notwithstanding this performance on the GBS front, the historical gap that needs to be made up is so large that a much accelerated programme of rail connectivity is required to provide the basic infrastructure capacity for the North East to realize its economic potential. To this end, the Summit agreed that the 14 major railway projects listed in the annex will be sought to be completed within the 11<sup>th</sup> plan period with an investment of around Rs. 10,000 cr. However, the provision of the required funds is but the beginning; what is required to be able to ensure that the availability of funds is matched by performance on the ground is the packaging of the following key action points, all of which were found to be feasible and practical by the Summit participants:

- i) A long-term plan which clearly indicates the phases in which identified projects will be completed in five year time frame of the 11<sup>th</sup> plan period.
- ii) The release of the annual installments by the Ministry of Finance at the BE stage and not at the RE stage as at present.
- iii) The determination by the Ministry of Railways, in association with the State governments concerned, of the availability of capacity to undertake the physical work implied in the financial estimates with a view to augmenting the capacity to the required extent to fulfill the physical target. In this connection, particular note was taken of the willingness of the Ministry of Railways to enter into partnership with domestic and foreign partners to attain the specified targets within accelerated time frame.
- iv) Pari passu with determining the availability of financial resources and construction capacity, the need to estimate security requirements and ensure that security considerations do not stand in the way of meeting financial or physical targets.
- v) The establishment of a comprehensive monitoring mechanism, with representatives from all the stakeholders concerned, to keep under regular and frequently review the progress of works and the removal of road blocks.

With a view to approaching the question of railway construction in this comprehensive manner, it was underlined that the stakeholders ministries, agencies and State government concerned should adopt the Mission Mode so that all problems of coordination are resolved within the Mission Mode and the agencies concerned work together towards a common objective.

The Summit recognized that if the 14 projects annexed are in fact completed within the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan period through the Mission Mode, as agreed, it will transform the face of the transport infrastructure in the North-East and unleash the enormous development potential of the region.

Over and above the 14 major projects identified in the annex, it was agreed to further explore with the next few months the following innovative ideas put forward by different state delegations.

- i) Arunachal Pradesh: A concept paper on the 'India-China Friendship Railway' to bring railway to those parts of the North-East that border China and possibly link up with the Chinese rail network which now extends into Tibet up to Lhasa and beyond. Further, another concept paper will be prepared by the Government of Arunachal Pradesh highlighting the railway construction requirements which will be indispensable to the full utilization by the North East and the country as a whole of the power generation potential of 30,000-50,000 MW from Arunachal Pradesh alone.
- ii) Meghalaya: A concept paper linking Jogighopa through the plains of West Garo District and the southern plains bordering Bangladesh all the way through the East Khasi and Jantia Districts to link up with the Lumding-Silchar railway line so as to exploit the potential for horticulture products such as cashew nuts and anthuriums as also the vast mineral deposits, including coal, limestone and uranium, of Meghalaya.
- iii) Tripura: A concept paper on extending railways to connect with all the Land Custom Stations, planned and proposed, on the frontiers of the North-Eastern Region with neighboring countries. The Tripura delegation will also prepare a concept paper on the steps required to rejuvenate Bangladesh interest in trade and transit relations with India in general and North-Eastern Region in particular, especially with reference to a possible linkage from Sabroom to Chittagong.
- iv) Mizoram: The Ministry of Railways, in association with the Government of Mizoram, to prepare a concept paper on extending the proposed Bairabi to Sairang broad gauge line to a river port on the Kolodyne River with a view to linking up with the proposal to established riverine transport to Sittwe port in Myanmar.

- v) Nagaland: The Ministry of Railway, in association with State Government of Nagaland, to explore the possibility of marginal adjustments in the route alignment to touch locations of economic significance in the hill states of the North-East, including Nagaland. The Government of Nagaland will give a concept paper on railway lines along the foothills of Nagaland.

As and when the concept papers are ready, discussions will be organized by the Ministry of DoNER between stakeholders at the capital of the States or in Delhi, as appropriate.

State delegations made a number of State-specific suggestions for improving Rail Connectivity. These are listed in the section 'Issues & Conclusions' and will be further pursued with the authorities concerned. There was general agreement that every effort should be made to extend and modify proposed railway alignment to connect up with State capitals wherever present proposals fall short of reaching the State capital. In this connection, special emphasis was laid on the following proposed extensions/modifications:

- i) Mizoram: Bairabi- Sairang to be extended to Aizawl.
- ii) Manipur: Jiribam-Tupul line to be extended to Imphal
- iii) Nagaland:Dimapur-Zubza to be extended to Kohima
- iv) Meghalaya: Azra - Byrnihat to be extended to Shillong.
- v) Sikkim: Siliguri to Rangpo to be extended to as near to Gangtok as feasible.

The Summit agreed that Ministry of DoNER and NEC should be associated on a continuing basis and as a matter of right in the inter-ministerial issues relating to the railway network of the North-East.

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