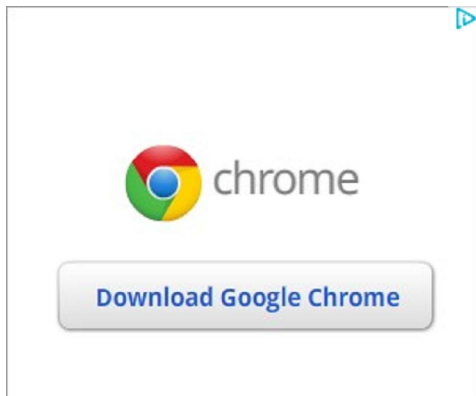


Review committee on Hubli-Ankola Line report in 15 days

Hubli, Sep 17: The committee to review the construction of Hubli-Ankola Railway line led by Dr. Ramachandra here today questioned the need for the proposed line after after the ban on transportation of manganese and iron ore from Bellary and nearby areas in North Karnataka.



Talking to reporters after review meeting with the officials of South Central Railway he said the committee would submit its report in another fifteen days.

He said the committee had taken up the study of traffic rush after the permanent ban on transportation of iron ore to Karwar port. The team had asked the South Central Railway authorities to provide the date on this particular issue and as soon as the information arrived from the railways a report would be submitted to State Government.

He conceded that the status of this area has been totally different from the date it was proposed to construct railway line between Hubli and Karwar. There has been considerable reduction in forest resource in this area. At the same time the scenario regarding transportation of iron ore has also been changed. It is pertinent to know the situation at this juncture to decide the relevance of railway line, he felt.

Dr Ramachandra informed that a team of nine scientists from Indian Institute of Science had already travelled along with the area of proposed railway line. The committee would recommend its suggestions to reduce the environmental hazards in its report as far as possible. "We have completed 80 per cent of our work and the rest 20 per cent would be completed soon after collecting public opinion from the people of Dharwad and Uttara Kannada district as well as the officials of departments concerned" he added.

He said there was a need of 1135 hectares of land along the proposed rail line out of which 720 hectares were covered by forests, 210 hectares dry land and 179 hectares watershed area of she Bedthi River. The forest area is depleted considerably there is much scope for plantation of tress more than the existing plants.

He said the team had studied the history of 25 years about the status of Western Ghat with the help of satellite pictures and also personally making visits to the area. He suggested construction of tunnels between Kalghatagi and Kiravatti area to protect the forest reserve for the wild elephants as number elephant habitat is found.

He also said instead of constructing 20 railway stations only 13 stations could be constructed.

The team has suggested to maintain the rare species of animals and insects as well as medicinal plant existing along the western ghats.

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