



By N R Madhusudhan

24 Sep 2011 08:59:24 AM IST

## IISc expert team says Hubli-Ankola line feasible

BANGALORE: The most sought after railway project in the state, Hubli - Ankola railway line, might finally materialise after nearly 20 years of uncertainty as the expert committee consisting of professors from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) have said that the project is feasible in the report that they are likely to submit within 15 days to the state government.

However, the remedial measures suggested by the committee that includes Professor T G Seetharam and D T V Ramachandran, will burn a big hole in the pockets of the railways as many bridges and tunnels have to be constructed as part of the remedial measure to minimise tree felling. While refusing to divulge the contents of the report, professor Seetharam said, " We have completed our study and the report is nearing completion.

We might submit the report within 15 days and in our opinion the project is feasible," Seetharam said.

"However, we have also suggested various remedial measures to minimise the damage to the ecology in the region," Seetharam added.

According to sources, the entire railway line is divided into three parts — Hubli to Yellapura, Yellapura to Sathasall and Sathasall to Ankola.

The terrain that falls in between Yellapura and Sathasall has thick forests and therefore, the experts have suggested that many tunnels and bridges should be constructed to minimize ecological damage.

Sources added that, the team after studying the biological diversity, ecology and environment in the region concluded that, the project can be implemented by cutting less than 1.5 lakh trees, which is 1 lakh less than the original estimates.

The 163.8 km railway line between Hubli and Ankola would require 1,134 hectare, which includes 727 hectare of forest land, 210 hectare of dry lands and 179 hectare of wetland.

These lands will be completely degraded with the implementation of the project.

Moreover, the railway line would pass through the sensitive tiger reserve area.

According to rough estimates, if suggestions made by experts are implemented, it would cost more than ` 12 crore to lay a 1 km railway line in the forest area, which is four times the cost of laying the railway line in the plains.

The state is planning to approach the Union Environment Ministry to seek clearance for the project as the environment ministry has denied clearance for the project.

©Copyright 2008 ExpressBuzz