

Memo to Railway Minister



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Anup Biswas 26 February 2013 11539 views

With the requests like 1.to cancel the decision to extend Hill Queen Express up to Silchar, 2. to depute 2 (Two) more personnel in the Ticket Counter at the Haflon) Railway Station, and 3.to cancel the decision to abolish the Enquiry Counter/System at the Haflong Railway Station Requesting for cancellation of the decision to extend the Hill Queen Express up to Silchar, the Joint Action Committee (JAC) comprising the Public Services Forum (PSF) and various NGO and Student Organisations of the Dima Hasao district has submitted memoranda to the Union Railway Minister, the General Manager, NF Railways, Maligaon, Guwahati.

The memorandum maintained that the connectivity is one of the biggest problems that has affected the socio-economic life of the people of the Dima Hasao District in Assam in spite of the fact that the physical distance between Haflong, the district headquarters and Guwahati was not very far. Realizing this situation, Shri Debojeet Thaosen and Shri Kulendra Daulagupu, both then newly elected Members of the NC Hill Autonomous Council had approached Shri Ashutosh Swami, the then General Manager of the NF Railways to address this very problem. They invited him to the Central Bushu Dima Celebration Programme at Haflong as the Chief Guest and accordingly, Shri Ashutosh Swami visited Haflong to grace the programme. During his visit at Haflong, he took stock of the connectivity situation after interacting with the civil society of the district. Consequently, Shri Ashutosh Swami took the decision to introduce the Hills Queen Special Train as a link train to the Jana Satapdi Express w.e.f. 20th February 2008. And for the last 5 (Five) years, this special Train has done immense services to the common people of the Dima Hasao district, benefiting the students pursuing higher studies and the patients undergoing better treatment in Guwahati and elsewhere, traders and Businessmen, the District Officials, Security Personnel and other classes of the People from the district.

It is learnt that the NF Railway authority has decided to extend the Hill Queen Express up to Silchar from 1st March 2013. If this was indeed the case then the Joint Action Committee (JAC) comprising the Public Services Forum (PSF) and NGOs and Student Organisations of the Dima Hasao strongly opposed the Extension of Hill Queen Express up to Silchar. As elaborated earlier, the Hill Queen Express was introduced exclusively for the people of the Dima Hasao district under extraordinary circumstances. As such, the Hill Queen Express should remain as it is - exclusively for Dima Hasao. Because, three Trains - Barak Valley Express, Cachar Express and Agartala Passenger Train are currently running for the people of the Barak Valley. If need be, another Special Train may also be introduced for them as the connecting train to the Jana Satapdi Express. But the people of the Dima Hasao should not be deprived of the primary facilities and rights.

It is also learnt that instead of the stipulated 3 (Three) Personnel in the Ticket Counter, there was only a single person at present at the Haflong Railway Station, resulting in immense hardships to the commuters. Further, it is learnt that the existing enquiry counter/system was about to be abolished at the Haflong Railway Station. If that be the case, then it will create a lot of difficulties to the people of Haflong and Dima Hasao.

The further stated that if the NF Railway authority failed to understand the sentiments and difficulties of the people of Dima Hasao, and decided to carry on its proposal of extension of the 'Hill Queen Express' up to Silchar, the Joint Action Committee (JAC) comprising the Public Service Forum (PSF) and various NGOs and Student of the Dima Hasao District would be compelled to launch agitation shortly.

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Anup Biswas - Journalist from Haflong.

BY ANUP BISWAS

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