

Now Barak Valley demands separate economic development council

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Being disillusioned by top-level corruption and slow pace of development in the Barak Valley, the southern-most part of the Assam state, the people have now raised demands for a separate economic development council for the region. Under the banner of Barak Valley Economic Development Council Demand Committee, the Central committee President, Kishore Kumar Bhattacharjee along with Karimganj unit chief, Jyotirmoy Das, Hailakandi unit chief, Mahibur Rahman Choudhury and Cachar unit chief, Nimai Sarma, submitted a memorandum to Assam Chief Minister, Tarun Gogoi in Guwahati during first week of this month demanding construction and improvement of roads under the area and early completion of Silchar- Lumding Broad-Gauge railway line. The copies of the memorandum have also been sent to the Chief Secretary of Assam and National Presidents of major political parties. It has been learnt that the chief minister agreed to go through the text and progress of works and assured considering the demands sympathetically.

The committee recalled that the communication in Barak valley was in shabbles and the road conditions were in dilapidated condition and worst due to the sub-standard work. The roads constructed or renovated in the region do not last more than six months due to poor construction. As a result the people suffer immensely and are very aggrieved. There is only one life line connecting road NH 44 from Silchar to Guwahati via Meghalaya and the rest of the country through the high hill areas with zigzag road and the journey is very tiresome and risky. The thousands of people who travel through this route are the worst sufferer. The committee demanded that the NH 44 from Digorkhal to Karimganj via Kalain and Badarpur should be completed expeditiously.

The committee leaders reiterated that the Government of India sanctioned a National Project for setting up of Silchar Lumding Broad-Gauge railway line in the year 1996 and till now around 30 percent of the works are completed during last twelve years, which should be completed without further delay.

Among other demands the committee informed that the Union government sanctioned another project for construction of East-West corridor from Silchar to Saurashtra via Guwahati and although the work started six years back it was stopped midway in North Cachar Hills areas due to subversive activities.

The power supply in Barak valley is also in the worst condition and therefore the committee demanded adequate power supply for the region. Committee's other demands include construction of barrage over River Barak and other rivers of Barak valley for flood containment, irrigation and production of Hydro-electrical energy. Demands included for improvement, modernization and extension of agriculture and irrigation facilities in Barak Valley. The charter of demands includes setting up of micro, small and medium industries in the area and modernization of tea industry. Besides, the demands also included a separate secretariat and circuit branch of Gauhati High Court and Administrative Tribunal for Barak Valley. Extension and development of fishery in Barak valley and development of tourism also included in the charter of demands.

Daya Nath Singh

Journalist; Guwahati Press Club office Secretary

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