

COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

(THIRTEENTH LOK SABHA)

NINTH REPORT



(Presented to Lok Sabha on 24.7.2001)

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

July, 2001/Sravana, 1923 (Saka)

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS	(iii)
I INTRODUCTION	(v)
II REPORT	1
(i) Petition regarding conversion of Aurihar-Jaunpur meter gauge line into broad gauge	1
(ii) Petition requesting to allow passenger traffic on existing railway line between Kurla and Mahul in Eastern Mumbai (Maharashtra)	8
(iii) Representation regarding discrepancy in electricity and water bills in respect of the residence of Shri Manbendra Shah, MP	13
(iv) Action taken by Government on the recommendations made by the Committee on Petitions (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) in their Second Report on the petition regarding development and improvement of Shyamacharanpur passenger halt under Khurda Road Division of South Eastern Railway	18
(v) Gist of the representation regarding termination of a Group 'D' Employee in Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi	21

APPENDICES

(i) Petition No. 5 regarding conversion of Aurihar-Jaunpur meter gauge line into broad gauge	22
(ii) Petition No. 4 requesting to allow passenger traffic on existing railway line between Khurda and Mahul in Eastern Mumbai (Maharashtra)	24

Corrigenda to the Ninth Report of the Committee on Petitions (13th Lok Sabha)

<u>Page No.</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Read</u>
4	6 from bottom	trains	trains
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**COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS
(2001-2002)**

Shri Basudeb Acharia—*Chairman*

MEMBERS

2. Shri A. Narendra
3. Shri Ramakant Angle
4. Shri S. Bangarappa
5. Shri Manibhai Ramjibhai Chaudhri
6. Shri Anant Gangaram Geete
7. Shri P.R. Khunte
8. Shri P.R. Kyndiah
9. Shri K. Malaisamy
10. Shri Ashok N. Mohol
11. Shri Sis Ram Ola
12. Shrimati Renu Kumari
13. Dr. Nitish Sengupta
14. Shri V. Vetriselvan
15. Vacant

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri Ram Autar Ram— *Joint Secretary*
2. Shri P.K. Grover — *Deputy Secretary*
3. Shri J.S. Chauhan — *Under Secretary*
4. Smt. Neera Singh — *Assistant Director*

**NINTH REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS
(THIRTEENTH LOK SABHA)**

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman, Committee on Petitions, having been authorised by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present this Ninth Report of the Committee to the House on the following matters:

- (i) Petition regarding conversion of Aurihar-Jaunpur metre gauge line into broad gauge;
- (ii) Petition requesting to allow passenger traffic on existing railway line between Kurla and Mahul in Eastern Mumbai (Maharashtra).
- (iii) Representation regarding discrepancy in electricity and water Bills in respect of the residence of Shri Manbendra Shah, MP;
- (iv) Action taken by Government on the recommendations made by the Committee on Petitions (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) in their Second Report on the petition regarding development and improvement of Shyamacharanpur passenger halt under Khurda Division of Eastern Railway; and
- (v) Gist of the representation regarding termination of a Group 'D' employee in Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi.

2. The Committee considered and adopted the draft Report at their sitting held on 17 July, 2001.

3. The observations/recommendations of the Committee on the above matters have been included in the Report.

NEW DELHI;
19 July, 2001

28 Sravana, 1923 (Saka)

BASUDEB ACHARIA,
Chairman,
Committee on Petitions.

CHAPTER I

PETITION REGARDING CONVERSION OF AURIHAR-JAUNPUR METRE GAUGE LINE INTO BROAD GAUGE

1.1 On 3 May, 2000, Shri Tufani Saroj, M.P. presented to Lok Sabha a petition signed by Shri Anil Kumar Singh, Lecturer, Department of Psychology, Shri Ganeshrai Graduate College, Dobhi (U.P.) and others regarding conversion of Aurihar-Jaunpur metre gauge line into broad gauge (See Appendix-I).

1.2 The petitioners in their petition submitted that by the conversion of the metre gauge Rail line between Aurihar railway junction and Jaunpur railway junction (U.P.) into broad gauge line about 1000 villages around the area and 5,00,000 people would be benefited. The petitioners contended that the present metre gauge Rail line was very old. It had been the means of transport for the people since pre-independence days. Previously, two passenger trains were running on this line and were passing through this line almost eight times in 24 hours, that is both the trains were crossing each other four times and were running to their full capacity. However, the passenger trains had been discontinued for the last few years and in place of these large trains a single bogie bus train has been introduced, which is too small to cope with the need of the commuters of the area.

The petitioners further stated that in the absence of the adequate rail communication system some private buses and tempos operating on the parallel road of this route were charging exorbitant fare from the poor people. Their availability is also not adequate. Hence, the road which was going parallel to this line was not at all adequate to meet the transport requirements of the people. People who had to go either to the district headquarters of Ghazipur or to Jaunpur for purchase of their day-to-day requirements or to attend the courts of these towns for seeking justice in respect of their lands and other excuses, faced a lot of inconvenience for want of adequate transport facility.

1.3 The petitioners, therefore, prayed that the railway transport which was no match to other means of transport in this area should be restored immediately. Metre gauge railway lines connecting both

the Aurihar and Jaunpur Railway junctions should be converted into broad gauge as this route had five major stations and a number of Halts in between to cater to the poor commuters of the area.

1.4 The petition was referred to the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) for furnishing their comments on the various points raised in the petition. In response, the Ministry *vide* their communication dated 16 May, 2000 stated that the survey for gauge conversion of Aurihar to Jaunpur rail line had been completed. It had revealed that the cost of the 60 km. long line would be Rs. 67 crores with a low rate of return. In view of the grossly un-remunerative nature of the line and the acute constraint of resources, it had not been found possible to consider this work for the present.

1.5 The Committee, thereafter, took oral evidence of the representatives of Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) on 19th September, 2000. During evidence the Committee desired to know the reason for not including the Aurihar-Jaunpur metre gauge section in the Project Uni-Gauge 1992. To this, the Member Traffic (Railway Board) stated as follows:—

“The Policy of uni-gauge was announced ten years back. The moment that policy was announced, the normal criteria for determining which routes should be converted and which routes should not be converted based on economic criteria, was done away with. It was decided that every section has to be done and priority has got to be established. When we did this, we started investing on that basis. We have reached a stage today that on many sections which we have converted, only one difference has come in those section, instead of running one morning and one evening metre-gauge passenger train, we have started one broad-gauge passenger train both morning and evening. There are a number of sections of that type. The money that was spent on those gauge conversions has not given any return to anybody either by way of additional economic activity or by way of improved facilities of passenger movements. So, the result of that uni-gauge policy has not been commensurate with the expenditure that went into the whole system.

...

...

We have reached a situation today where the throw-forward of gauge conversions, which were sanctioned under the old policy, is so large that we do not have the funds. We have, therefore, perforce to slow down the entire gauge conversion project. When we reviewed the gauge conversion projects, we found that the sections which were remunerative and economically viable have been definitely benefited but there are large sections which have not given any return or benefit to the local population or the Indian Railway. So, the point

today is that we have to slow down gauge conversion projects which have already been sanctioned and are in the pipeline. Now, even out of those projects which are in the pipeline, we have now to priorities those and try to first complete those on which we would get good results."

1.6. Regarding the Project Uni-Gauge, the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) in a 'Status Paper on Gauge Conversion' submitted to the Committee, informed that gauge conversion had been going on slowly ever since independence but the Railways decided in consultation with the Planning Commission that *w.e.f.* 1.4.1992 a thrust be given to gauge conversion by taking up Project Uni-Gauge for the selective conversion of Metre Gauge (MG)/Narrow Gauge (NG) lines to Broad Gauge (BG) over a three Five Year Plan periods. On the present policy of the Government regarding gauge conversion, the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) submitted that about 8582 km of MG/NG lines to BG had been converted in the last 8 years and the time has now come to consolidate the new routes developed and integrate them fully into the system. In view of this, it was proposed to concentrate on making the converted routes by providing missing facilities. With the need to conserve resources and to first meet the needs of capacity generation on the saturated routes, the outlays on gauge conversion were now being reduced and the works in the progress had been prioritized so that the lines required on operational considerations became available first. The work on the other projects was proposed to be regulated as per availability of resources and completed in the coming years.

1.7. In a written note, the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) informed that the conventional passenger train services had been discontinued since 5.12.1996 in the Aurihar-Jaunpur rail section. A single Rail Bus had been introduced after the Aurihar-Jaunpur section was isolated as a result of conversion of adjoining sections. The frequency of the Rail Bus was kept at three pairs daily instead of two pairs passenger train services which existed earlier. The capacity of the Rail Bus was 50 sitting and 25 standing *i.e.* totaling to 75 passengers. The second class ordinary Fare/Rail bus Fare amounted to Rs. 11/- and Private Bus/Tempo Fare amounted to Rs. 30/-.

1.8. On a query regarding number of rail sections isolated due to gauge conversion in their adjoining areas, the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) in their subsequent written note informed that 11 MG sections in the country have been isolated as a result of gauge conversions in the adjoining areas. 21 more sections will be isolated after completion of all gauge conversion works included in the budget so far.

1.9. When the Committee desired to know as to when the survey for gauge conversion was completed in the Aurihar-Jaunpur Section; the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) informed in a written note as follows:—

“A preliminary Engineering-cum-Traffic survey for gauge conversion of Aurihar-Jaunpur section from MG to BG was conducted in 1986. The survey report revealed that the cost of the 58.66 km long line would be Rs. 16.31 cr. with a rate of return of 1.33%. In view of the grossly un-remunerative nature of line and acute constraints of resources, it was not found possible to consider the work. However, based on persistent demand, an updating survey was ordered in 1998, which was completed in June, 1999. The report revealed that the cost would be Rs. 66.61 cr. with a rate of return of 6.10%. However, in view of the low Rate of Return (RoR) and heavy throwforward of works in progress in this plan head, it had not been found possible to consider the project for the present. The project can be considered after the ongoing projects get completed and the resource position improved or if the traffic requirements so warrant in future.”

1.10. The Committee took further evidence of the representatives of Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) on 16th May, 2001. During the evidence, the Committee asked as to how the needs of about 32 lakh population residing in the 60 km. area of Aurihar-Jaunpur section were met by the Rail Bus service introduced on this Section. To this, the Member Traffic (Railway Board) stated as follows:—

“Now, there are three passenger services running on the section. The average ticket sale in 1995-96 was around 309 and today it is around 721. We are carrying almost double the number of passengers through rail buses than we had originally. The rail fare had gone up only by Rs. 2 (from Rs. 9—Rs. 11 in 1995-96) for maximum distance.”

1.11. When the Committee desired to know the average number of passengers travelling in the conventional trains *vis-a-vis* the number of passengers travelling in the Rail Bus; the Member Traffic (Railway Board) informed as follows:-

“In the year 1995-96, before the conversion, the average number of passengers were 309. As on March 2001, the average is 721. In February, 2001 it was 708 and in January 2001 it was 671.”

1.12. When the Committee pointed out that people residing near the Aurihar-Jaunpur section were affected by the discontinuance of the conventional long tains; the Member Traffic (Railway Board) conceded as follows:

“The number of passengers might have gone up and the local service level might have improved, but, for the people going beyond that definitely discomfort has come in. They have to get off and change (the train).”

He added:—

“A policy decision has been taken by which a number of sections have become isolated. We are fully conscious of the fact that isolation causes a little more hardship to the people residing there. But the decision was taken perhaps taking the larger good of connecting a large number of people from one end to another.”

1.13. When the Committee desired to know the criteria followed in taking behind the decision of conversion of the meter gauge line into broad gauge line the Member Traffic (Railway Board) explained as follows:—

“As far as Ministry processing the papers is concerned, its starts with the requirement of traffic, remunerativeness of the returns and prioritization of the return justification”.

1.14. The Committee pointed out that in the case of Aurihar-Jaunpur Section, the inconvenience has been created because of the gauge conversion of the adjoining sections and asked whether it was not desirable to convert this isolated section into broad gauge in order to remove this inconvenience. The witness stated:—

“I cannot agree with you more on this subject that a gauge conversion has created a problem for a section of the people where services are available. Where services are not available, it is different story but where services are available, which have been removed, we have to give some higher priority but..... this gauge conversion consumes so much resources that railways have to go to market borrowing.”

1.15. The Committee pointed out to the witness that the petitioners were demanding for the conversion of the meter gauge line to broad gauge line in the Aurihar-Jaunpur Section. They have contended that by the conversion of the line into broad gauge at this section a direct route for Chhapra-Aurihar-Jaunpur-Lucknow could be established. To this, the Member Traffic (Railway Board) stated as follows:—

“Yes, we understand that priority should be given to isolated section is the view of the Committee. So, we will definitely take a view on it and inform the hon'ble Minister of Railways about it”.

1.16. When the Committee desired that there was a necessity for consultation of the local MLAs or MPs representing the constituency regarding convenience of the people residing in their area before discontinuance of a Railway service; the Member Traffic (Railway Board) assured as under:—

“We have noted the concern expressed by the Committee and also the need to consult the local MPs and MLAs as the time of survey. We will appropriately brief the Minister on the subject about the

view and sentiments expressed by the Committee and we will process it, in the Railway Ministry, with all the seriousness that it deserves.”

Observations/Recommendations

1.17. The Committee note that conventional trains running on the Aurihar-Jaunpur railway junctions have been the main means of transport since the pre-independence days of the country. However, these conventional trains have been suddenly stopped in the Aurihar-Jaunpur section since December 1996. After discontinuance of the conventional long trains on the Aurihar-Jaunpur section about 32 lakh population residing in the adjoining areas of this Section are facing a lot of inconvenience for want of adequate rail transport facility. According to the petitioners, even the road which is running parallel to this line is not adequate to meet the transport requirements of the people. The private buses/tempos operating on this route are charging exorbitant fare from the poor passengers. According to the information furnished to the Committee by the Ministry of Railways, against the second class ordinary fare/rail fare of Rs. 11/- between Aurihar-Jaunpur the Private/Tempo fare was Rs. 30/-.

1.18. One of the main contention of the petitioners is that by the conversion of the Metre Gauge (MG) rail line between Aurihar Railway Junction and Jaunpur Railway Junction into broad gauge line about 1000 villages around the area and about 5 lakh people would be benefitted. Both these junctions should be converted into Broad Gauge (BG) as there are five major Stations and a number of Halt Stations on this route. The railway lines beyond Aurihar and Jaunpur have already been converted into broad gauge.

1.19. The Committee are informed by the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) that gauge conversion had been going on slowly ever since independence of the country but the Railways decided in consultation with the Planning Commission that w.e.f. 1.4.1992 a thrust be given to gauge conversion by taking up Project Uni-gauge. The Project Uni-Gauge envisaged selective conversion of Metre Gauge (MG)/Narrow Gauge (NG) lines to Broad Gauge (BG) over three Five Year Plan periods. About 8582 kms. of MG/NG lines had been converted to BG in the last 8 years. However, the Aurihar-Jaunpur section has not been selected for gauge conversion.

1.20. The Committee note with dismay that the conventional trains services in the Aurihar-Jaunpur Section had been discontinued w.e.f. 5.12.1996. The Section was isolated as a result of conversion of adjoining sections. The Committee feel that the gauge conversion of MG/NG to BG lines have not been carried out in a scientific and planned manner which has resulted in creation of such isolated sections where optimum utilization of railway facilities cannot be reached. In place of the conventional trains, a Rail Bus with a frequency of three pairs daily has been introduced at Aurihar-Jaunpur section. The Committee, however, are not at all convinced

that a Rail Bus a capacity of 75 passengers could provide identical Railway passenger benefits as were being provided by conventional trains with larger passenger capacity. As agreed to before the Committee by the Member Traffic (Railway Board), in the absence of the conventional trains on this section lot of discomfort and inconvenience is being faced by people particularly those who have to go beyond Aurihar or Jaunpur since they have to get off the Rail Bus and catch another train.

1.21. The Committee wish to point out that the updating survey for conversion of this section completed in 1999 estimated a rate of return of 6.10% against a rate of return of 1.33% estimated in 1986. This is the increasing trend in the rate of return to the Railways. Besides, rate of return has admittedly not been the sole criteria for gauge conversions. Gauge conversions in the past have been taken up taking into account the social requirements. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that, the conversion of Aurihar-Jaunpur section into broad gauge should be given top priority by making appropriate railway budgetary allocations to surmount the miseries and discomfort of the poor passengers of this section. The Committee also recommend that the Gauge conversion of this section should be undertaken without loss of time. The Committee desire to be apprised of the probable date of undertaking the work and its completion within a period of three months from the date of presentation of this report to Lok Sabha. The Committee also desire that in future at the time of survey for gauge conversion the local MLAs or MPs may be consulted by the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board).

than 7 minutes. Also, buses in the area provided connectivity not only to Kurla but also to places like Ghatkopar. A comprehensive report on suburban transport system in Mumbai was prepared by M/s Atkins (a consultant firm). This report also did not recommend running of passenger services on Kurla-Mahul route. Therefore, using Kurla-Mahul goods line for passenger services was not being considered by the Railways at present.

2.5 The Committee after considering the comments furnished by the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) took the oral evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) on 19 September, 2000. During evidence the Member, Traffic (Railway Board) explained to the Committee as follows:—

“Mahul is a station near Trombay which is the terminal where we have the refineries and a fertiliser plant. This is a 4 km. goods line. This line serves the refineries and the fertiliser factory. This Kurla-Mahul line was constructed only for carrying freight to the fertiliser factory and the refineries. At one end, it ends in the Goods Yard and the Kurla-Mahul line cuts across up and down the lines of the Harbour branch and also up and down lines of the Mumbai-Kalyan quadruple line section.

So, this is the connection between the goods yard on the one side and the suburban section on the Mumbai-Kalyan section on the other. A preliminary survey was done in the past. The cost of upgrading this four-kilometre stretch was worked out to be about Rs. 28 crore at 1996-97 prices. The whole issue of streamlining and augmenting the capacities for running of suburban services in Mumbai area was taken up by the World Bank Team. A Consultant firm, M/s Atkins, was appointed for this purpose who did a study for almost 3-1/2 years. He has given us a plan for strengthening the suburban section. He has done a lot of exercises based on the origin-destination flows of suburban passengers. As a result of that exercise, he has suggested fifth and sixth corridors from Kurla towards Thane side and other upgradations of the existing lines. He has not found enough traffic on this particular stretch of four-kilometre goods line. He has not included this for development of rail suburban lines. It has already been brought out by him that this four-kilometre stretch has a very efficient and frequent bus services. BEST is running bus services every seven minutes there. So, the availability of transport facilities for the passengers who may have to go into this area are very adequately provided by the BEST. So, that is basically the reason why this segment of the line has not been upgraded. It is a very costly proposition and will be counter-productive because the traffic is not significant. The origin-destination flows have shown

that the traffic potential is very marginal. This survey was done in 1992. The report was given to us in 1996-97."

2.6 When asked about the parameters of the survey made by M/s Atkins in 1992, the Member, Traffic (Railway Board) explained:—

"This was a very major project. Actually, the World Bank wanted that the total suburban system in Mumbai area should be studied. They were willing to provide funds for development of the suburban system. In fact, M/s Atkins were one of the World Bank consultants. They along with our experts in that area had created a new Transport Planning Cell. That continuously did the studies for almost 6-7 years. We got the final Report in 1996-97. On the basis of that, a new Corporation has been created in Mumbai area. Basically, they tried to study the flows of traffic. They also did the origin-destination surveys. That is the basis. As you know, Mumbai area is the most heavily worked suburban system in the country. We do need to extend services there."

2.7 The Committee desired to know as to why so much money *i.e.* Rs. 28 crore is required for upgradation of Kurla-Mahul stretch of Railway line from freight traffic to passenger traffic. To this, the Member, Traffic (Railway Board) stated as follows:—

"For running suburban services, firstly, doubling of the section will be required because unless a double line is provided, the frequency will not be there. The upgradation of permanent way of signalling system will have to be done. Platforms have to be provided at the terminal and enroute stations. There are two more stations in between. One terminal is also there. The passenger amenities at terminals, etc., will have to be done. Provision of approach roads to the station has to be done. There are very heavy encroachments in this area. The removal of encroachments also will have to be done. In the Mumbai area, 50 per cent rehabilitation charge in the case of encroachments is also there. So, the costs mount up. For just four-kilometre stretch, we will have to spend Rs. 28 crore based on 1996-97 prices."

2.8 The Committee pointed out that the city of Mumbai is extending towards the southern side. It is being connected to Panvel. Therefore, the passenger traffic pressure on Kurla-Mahul line would sufficiently increase. In such circumstances railway passenger service will prove more useful because rail fare is cheaper than BEST buses fare. To this, the Member, Traffic (Railway Board) affirmed as follows:—

"In fact we are charging less. We are charging 11 single journey tickets for a monthly pass. The basic fare is also half or one-third of the BEST charges. So, it is almost free. Therefore, everybody would like to go by train."

2.9 Regarding the fare structure of suburban trains *vis-a-vis* the BEST buses, the Member, Traffic (Railway Board) informed as follows:—

“The fare structure that we have is one-tenth or one-eighth of bus fare structure, if you take the monthly season ticket into account. People prefer to travel by train. BEST is carrying hardly one fifteenth of the traffic that the Railway does.”

2.10 As regards the passenger traffic from the Kurla to Mahul area, the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) in a subsequent written note dated 7.2.2001 informed that the average number of passengers who travelled daily during the last 3 years by BEST services between Kurla and Mahul was 33218. No suburban railway services were running on Kurla-Trombay section. However, the average number of passengers who travelled daily by Suburban Railway on Central Railway system during the last 3 years was 26.31 lakhs.

2.11 When the Committee pointed out that due to increase in population and increase in the number of workers/employees in refineries and other industries located at Mahul, the volume of passengers traffic would increase on Kurla-Mahul rail line and a fresh survey should be conducted to assess the latest passenger traffic on this rail line; Member, Traffic (Railway Board) stated:—

“We will have a survey conducted.”

Observations/Recommendations

2.12 The petitioners have requested that the goods rail line between Kurla to Mahul in eastern Mumbai should be converted into goods-cum-passenger traffic line for the convenience of the residents of Vasinaka, Mahul, Anik and Bandra in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The petitioners have contended that in the last 20 years the population of the adjoining areas of the Kurla-Mahul rail line had increased to seven lakhs (approximately). Therefore, opening up of this rail line for passenger train would be helpful to the poor people in the area.

2.13 The Committee have been informed by the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) that Mahul is a station near Trombay where there are refineries and fertilizer plants. The Kurla-Mahul rail line was constructed only for carrying freight to the fertilizer factory and the refineries. The Kurla-Mahul rail line cuts across up and down the lines of the Harbour Branch and the Mumbai-Kalyan quadruple line section. After a preliminary survey of this rail line, it was ascertained that the cost of upgrading 4 kilometre stretch of Kurla-Mahul rail line would be about Rs. 28 crore at 1996-97 prices. A consultant firm M/s Atkins was appointed for the purpose of study on ‘Suburban Transport System’ in Mumbai. M/s Atkins carried out a study in 1992 for almost 3 1/2 years and gave its report in 1996-97 which did not recommend running of passenger services on Kurla-Mahul route. Based on the recommendation made by this firm, the Railways have

not considered to introduce passenger services on the Kurla-Mahul goods rail line.

2.14 The Committee would like to point out that more than 8 years have elapsed since the survey of the "Suburban Railway Transport" was made by M/s Atkins in 1992 and with the increase in population, the position must have changed considerably. The fact that the average number of passengers who travelled daily during the last 3 years by BEST bus services between Kurla-Mahul was 33218, shows that the passenger traffic potential between Kurla and Mahul is substantially high. Besides, the city of Mumbai is extending towards the southern side. Therefore, the Committee are of the firm opinion that a passenger train on Kurla-Mahul line would be of immense utility for the people, since the rail fare is considerably cheaper than the fare charged by the city buses. The Committee, therefore, recommend that as assured to them a fresh survey should be conducted without delay to ascertain the actual volume of anticipated passenger traffic on suburban trains in the Kurla-Mahul area and passenger rail service on this route should be started soon for the benefit of the daily commuters from the area.

CHAPTER III

REPRESENTATION REGARDING DISCREPANCY IN ELECTRICITY AND WATER BILLS IN RESPECT OF THE RESIDENCE OF SHRI MANBENDRA SHAH, M.P.

3.1 Shri Manbendra Shah, M.P. sent a representation dated 5 February, 2000 stating *inter-alia* that the electricity and water bills in respect of his residence, 5, Bhagwan Dass Road, New Delhi for the period October, 1996 to September, 1997 including the arrears of Rs. 47,910/- was received from NDMC. These arrears apparently related to the period for which no bill had been issued by NDMC. Further bills received included the arrears and surcharge on compound basis.

3.2 The hon'ble member, therefore, requested that NDMC authorities might be directed to waive the surcharge and dual surcharge added by them in the bills and in the meantime they might be directed not to disconnect the supply of electricity and water connection at his residence.

3.3 The representation was forwarded to the Ministry of Home Affairs on 11 February, 2000 for furnishing their comments on the points raised therein.

3.4 Meanwhile, in another representation dated 29 February, 2000 Shri Manbendra Shah, M.P. stated that the NDMC authorities had disconnected electricity supply from his residence w.e.f. 29 February, 2000. This representation was also forwarded to the Ministry of Home Affairs on 29 February, 2000 for taking urgent necessary action in the matter.

3.5 The Ministry of Home Affairs furnished their comments *vide* their communication dated 4 April, 2000 as under:—

“The report furnished by the Chairman, New Delhi Municipal Council, indicates that as per the record of the Council, the bills for the billing cycle February, 1997 and March, 1997 were issued to the Hon'ble member and when not paid, these were claimed as arrears in the billing cycle of October, 1997. The hon'ble Member of Parliament is, however, reported to have had not made any payment since 25th March, 1997. It was only on 3rd March, 2000 when he made a part-payment of Rs. 1,27,395/-.

The hon'ble Member had earlier made a request for waiver of surcharge but this was not acceded to by the Council since all the bills had been issued to him well before the due date. He was, however, in February, 2000 allowed to make the payment of arrears in 6 equal monthly instalments.

The Chairman, NDMC has further reported that as per the existing approved tariff, the non-payment or delayed payment of electricity/water charges attracted surcharge @ 3% compounding per month or part thereof. The total dues including surcharge outstanding against the Hon'ble member was Rs. 4,79,894.43 which now stood reduced to Rs. 3,52,499.43 with the payment as aforesaid made by the hon'ble member on 3rd March, 2000."

3.6 On 12 December, 2000, Shri Manbendra Shah, M.P. sent another representation and stated that he had paid the undisputed amount in full and had also been making payment of the current electricity/water bills regularly. He had not paid the disputed amount which had been carried forward by NDMC as arrears after adding further surcharge each time. He stated that according to NDMC, the total amount of such arrears with surcharge thereon on compound basis came to Rs. 2,92,039/-. He, therefore, requested the Committee to urge NDMC to dispose off his case and stop adding the surcharge.

3.7 The Committee after considering the comments furnished by the Ministry of Home Affairs took oral evidence of the officials of Ministry of Home Affairs on 27 February, 2001.

3.8 When asked to explain about the system of electricity and water billing by NDMC and also the reasons for not issuing bills by NDMC from January, 1997 to October, 1997 and adding surcharge, the representative of the Ministry of Home Affairs explained as under:—

"The bills are issued as per the billing cycle. This residence is, as I understand, is located at 5, Bhagwan Das Road. I hope this does not relate to the flat on South Avenue which is allotted to him by the House Committee. The NDMC follows a billing cycle according to which bills are issued either to the resident or to his representative and it is expected that the bills are paid on due date. Whenever there are delays occurring in payment or clearance of the bills, three per cent surcharge is added on as per practice."

The Chairman, NDMC added as under:—

"In January, 1997 the bill for three months amounting to Rs. 16,797 was raised which he paid by the due date. The next bill was for a period of three months for Rs. 11,570 which he did not pay.

Sir, the system is that once the payment is not received by the due date, a surcharge is added and it goes on to the next billing cycle. Normally, the billing cycle in NDMC is one in two months. This money, then, gets added with the current bill and then the total is sent as our bill to the consumer. In case it is not paid, again a surcharge gets added to the current bill as well as to the past bill. The only difference is that the current bill has a

surcharge of three percent and the past bills have a component of surcharge which is also on the earlier surcharge itself.

Therefore, when we are talking of the period January—September we are talking of a period when two bills were issued, one for three months period and another for four months' period. Normally the system is that the bill is given in the house and it is taken by one of the employees in the house and someone receives the bill. That is true for every one of us.

By October, 1997 since these two bills were not paid, the surcharge was levied which was very small by that time—Rs. 347 and Rs. 674. The amount came to Rs. 36,865. Then the amount of the current bill, Rs. 9,100, got added and it came to Rs. 46,000. Then this payment was not done till January, 2000."

3.9 In reply to a query by the Committee, the Chairman, NDMC informed that the outstanding amount of electricity bills in the name of the petitioner was Rs. 3,22,000.

He added as under:—

"Unfortunately, in this house, he is not getting the benefit of concession which a MP gets. So, there is no concession at all. Now, depending on the amount of sanctioned load that is available to him in four meters, even if he does not use a single unit of electricity, the minimum charges he has to pay, which everyone has to pay, would be Rs. 4,000 per month. Very interestingly, in the second cycle of billing, except for five or six months, mostly it was coming to Rs. 9,000, Rs. 5,000, Rs. 15,000, Rs. 5,000, Rs. 6,000, Rs. 18,000, Rs. 10,000 and so on. It means that he was not using extra electricity. He is not a very user of electricity but because these past payments are due, it has become a heavy amount..... The details of the Bill have been given; these details were taken out from the computer..... I have never received any complaint from the NDMC area of not receiving the electricity bills..... From August, 1996 to January, 1997, there was some problem because a computer fraud was detected, and the CBI is handling this case now. During this period, the next two bills were prepared by hand. Otherwise, since everything is computerized, the bills are delivered once in two months."

3.10 The Committee pointed out to the witness that the complaint of the petitioner was that the bill was not delivered to him in proper time and then desired to know as to whether a private party was assigned the work of billing. To this, Chairman, NDMC stated as under:—

"A private party was assigned with this work some time in 1994-95 for a period of six months. But in December 1996, it was found that he had actually defalcated the money,..... That contract was over by

January, 1997. The period that we are talking of now has nothing to do with any private party or anyone.”

3.11 When the Committee desired to know as to whether the petitioner had requested in writing to exempt the surcharge on his outstanding electricity bills, the Chairman, NDMC stated as under:—

“We have met face to face and I have explained to him that it was not possible. I said that no exemption of surcharge was possible to be given. There is also a PIL in the High Court. So, it was not possible to exempt the surcharge for any particular individual.”

Further he explained as under:—

“Actually, in January, 1997 we had no arrears. In the next bill the amount shown was Rs. 11,570. If I may explain, January, 1997 bill was paid. The next bill, for the month of February, was for an amount of Rs. 11,570. It was for a three months period because he did not pay on time. Rs. 347 was the surcharge. So, it became Rs. 11,570 plus Rs. 347. Then comes the next bill for Rs. 22,474 which gets added. ... Because it has not been paid from February 1997 upto December, 1999, for that period, automatically, surcharge would come.”

3.12 Concluding the discussion, the Committee desired that the issue may be resolved by the Ministry of Home Affairs. To this, the representative of the Ministry of Home Affairs assured the Committee to hold a meeting between the hon'ble member (Shri Manbendra Shah) and Chairman, NDMC and agreed to solve the problem.

3.13 The Ministry of Home Affairs were requested on 20 March, 2001 to inform about the position and outcome of the meeting. Meanwhile, Shri Manbendra Shah, MP in his letter dated 15 May, 2001, informed that he had a meeting with the Chairman, NDMC in his office on 4 April, 2001. The attitude of the Chairman, NDMC was anything but helpful and co-operative.

3.14 He further stated that the matter was discussed but the Chairman NDMC stuck to his position that no part of the surcharge as well as the additional surcharge could be waived. During the discussion, it was even suggested by Shri Shah that at least there should be a waiver of the surcharge from the date when the petition was filed before the Committee, but he did not agree to this. The most he was prepared to agree was that Shri Shah should pay the amount of arrears alongwith the current bills in three monthly instalments and for this period the amount would stand frozen, but even this was subject to his computer experts finding some method to keep the amount so frozen. The hon'ble member requested for waiver of surcharge on surcharge and freezing the surcharge from a particular point of time.

Observations/Recommendations

3.15 The Committee have been informed by the petitioner, Shri Manbendra Shah, M.P., that the Electricity and Water Bills in respect of his residence, 5, Bhagwan Dass Road, New Delhi for the period October, 1996 to September, 1997 including arrears of Rs. 47,910/- was received from NDMC. These arrears apparently related to the period for which no bill had been issued by NDMC. Further bills received included the arrears and surcharge on compound basis. In his further letter dated 12 December, 2000 he informed that he had paid the undisputed amount in full but not the disputed amount which had been carried forward by NDMC as arrears after adding surcharge. He therefore, requested to urge NDMC to waive surcharge and dual surcharge and stop adding the surcharge.

3.16 According to NDMC, as per their Rules, once the payment is not received by the due date, a surcharge is added and it goes on to the next billing cycle. This money, then, gets added with the current bill and then the total is sent as bill to the consumer. In case this is not paid, again a surcharge gets added to the current bill as well as to the past bill. The current bill has a surcharge of 3% and the past bills have a component of surcharge which is also on the earlier surcharge. The outstanding bill in the name of the petitioner came to Rs. 3.22 lakhs (February, 2001). At the instance of the Committee, a meeting was held between the hon'ble member and Chairman, NDMC on 4 April, 2001 to resolve the issue. However, the meeting could not apparently break the deadlock.

3.17 After considering all aspects of the case in detail, the Committee urge the Government to take a sympathetic view. They recommend that in order to settle the issue, at least the surcharge on surcharge should be waived altogether. For the rest of the amount, he may be allowed to make the payment in six monthly instalments.

CHAPTER IV

ACTION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS (THIRTEENTH LOK SABHA) IN THEIR SECOND REPORT ON THE PETITION REGARDING DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF SHYAMACHARANPUR PASSENGER HALT UNDER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION OF SOUTH EASTERN RAILWAY

4.1. The Committee on Petitions (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) had in their Second Report presented to Lok Sabha on 2 August, 2000 dealt with a petition presented to the House by Shri K.P. Singh Deo, M.P. on 23 December, 1999. The petition was signed by Shri Surendra Prasad Roy of Anandnagar, P.O./Distt. Dhenkanal (Orissa) and others regarding development and improvement of Shyamacharanpur passenger halt under Khurda Road Division of South Eastern Railway.

The petitioners had requested to provide proper platform with proper lighting and drinking water facilities at Shyamacharanpur Passenger Halt in Dhenkanal District for convenience of the passengers.

4.2. The Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) were requested to furnish their action taken notes indicating action taken by them to implement the recommendations made by the Committee for their consideration. The replies of the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) have been received. The recommendations made by the Committee and replies furnished by the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) are discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

4.3. In paragraph 1.10 of the Second Report (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) the Committee observed as follows:—

“The Committee have been informed that three trains stop at Shyamacharanpur Halt station under Khurda Road Division of Southeastern Railway. The traffic dealt with at the station is 53 passengers per day and the passenger earning is Rs. 545 per day. Considering the level of passenger traffic and norms laid down in respect of Halt Stations, certain passenger amenities including a rail level platform have been provided by the Railways at Shyamacharanpur Halt Station. However, the level of the platform is stated to have fallen below the rail level due to the insertion of pre-stressed concrete sleepers. While the Committee observe with a sense of gratification that after the matter was taken up by them, a hand-pump has also been provided at the Halt station, they would like to

point out that the passengers at the Shyamacharanpur Halt Station are still facing a lot of difficulties particularly while entraining and detraining due to the platform level being lower than the rail level. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the platform at the Shyamacharanpur Halt Station should be suitably raised. The feasibility of providing a foot over-bridge should also be examined."

(Para 1.10)

4.4. In their action taken reply, the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) have stated that the level of the platform has been raised up to the rail level.

4.5. In paragraph 1.11 of the Report the Committee observed as follows:—

"The Committee have also been informed that there are two full grown trees and eight saplings have been put up recently. However, the Committee desire that in order to provide a proper shelter to the passengers, a permanent shed should be constructed at the platform."

(Para 1.11)

4.6. In their action taken reply the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) have stated that as Shyamacharanpur halt station deals with meagre traffic, it has not been found justified to provide Foot Over Bridge for the present. The station has 16 sq.m. of covered area in the form of a waiting hall which is adequate for 18 nos. of passengers who frequent this station daily. Provision of a separate covered shed is not considered justified for the present, but can be taken up when traffic increases.

Recommendation/Observation

4.7. The Committee note with satisfaction that with the intervention of the Committee the platform of the Shyamacharanpur Halt Station has been raised upto the rail level. Regarding, the provisions for a Foot Over Bridge and a shed it has been stated by the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) that these provisions have not been found to be justified for the present as this Halt Station deals with meagre traffic and it has a 16 Sq.m. of covered area in the form of a waiting hall. In this respect, the Committee desire that the provisioning of a Foot Over Bridge and a shed at the Shyamacharanpur Halt Station may be made as per growth of passenger traffic in the area.

4.8. In paragraph 1.12 of the Second Report (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) the Committee observed as follows:—

“The Committee would also emphasise that although Shyamacharanpur Halt station is on a branch line, the line goes upto Talcher, an important industrial town. Besides, it is in the proximity of the religious tourist spots of Joranda (Mahimagadi) and Kapilas as well as Nandankanan. The Railways should, therefore, make all out efforts for increasing the passenger traffic on this line. The timings of the passenger trains may also be suitably adjusted to achieve an optimum level of passenger traffic.”

4.9. In their action taken reply, the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) have stated that at present on Rajatgarh-Denkanal section 6 pairs of trains are running of this, 3 pairs of trains are stopping at Shyamacharanpur Halt Station. The timing of these trains have been kept appropriately in such a way so as to cater to the passengers in the morning as well as in the evening.

Recommendation/Observation

4.10. Although, a number of passenger trains are passing through/ stopping at the Shyamacharanpur Halt Station, the Committee desire that all out efforts may be made to increase the passenger traffic in the area so that the Halt Station meets the required specification for better passenger facilities in due course.

CHAPTER V

GIST OF THE REPRESENTATION REGARDING TERMINATION OF A GROUP 'D' EMPLOYEE IN INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MASS COMMUNICATIONS, NEW DELHI

5.1. Shri Kariya Munda, M.P., had forwarded a representation dated 19 May, 2000 signed by Shri Prem Chand of 114, Village Vasant Vihar, New Delhi regarding termination of a group 'D' employee in Indian Institute of Mass Communications, New Delhi. In the representation the petitioner had stated that he worked on daily wages in the Indian Institute of Mass Communications, New Delhi from the year 1993 to 2000. On 15 February, 2000 he appeared for interview for the post of Messenger (Daily wages) in the same Institute but he was not selected for that post. The petitioner had further stated that as per the scheme notified by the Department of Personnel on 10 September, 1993 for grant of temporary status, he was eligible for grant of temporary status and consequent regularisation, but his claim was not considered by the Institute. He, therefore, requested that he may be granted temporary status and consequently also be considered for regularisation in Group 'D' post in Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi.

5.2. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting with whom the matter was taken up have *vide* their communication dated 21 December, 2000 furnished their comments intimating *inter-alia* that although instructions of DOPT of 10 September, 1993, related to according temporary status to casual workers already in position on that date, but looking into the fact that Shri Prem Chand had worked for a considerable number of days in IIMC, his case deserved sympathetic consideration. Accordingly, Shri Prem Chand had been granted temporary status under the scheme prescribed by DOP&T. Indian Institute of Mass Communication had already passed an order in this regard.

5.3. The Committee note with satisfaction that through their intervention, the demand of the petitioner has been met.

LOK SABHA

PETITION No. 5

(Presented to Lok Sabha on 3-5-2000)

To,

Lok Sabha,
New Delhi.

The humble petition of Shri Anil Kumar Singh, Lecturer, Department of Psychology, Shri Ganeshrai Graduate College, Dobhi (U.P.) and 117 others.

SHEWETH:

We, the undersigned petitioners do make a humble submission in public interest to please direct the Government of India for conversion of the meter gauge Rail line between Aurihar railway junction and Jaunpur railway junction (Uttar Pradesh) into broad gauge without delay.

We would also like to draw your attention towards the difficulties being faced by the people. About 1000 villages would be benefited by this rail line. From population point of view about 5,00,000 people are affected. This rail line is very old. This has been the means of communication for the people since the British rule. For the last several years, running of trains on this line has been completely stopped. Previously, two passenger train were running on this line and were passing through this line almost eight times in 24 hours, it means that both the trains were crossing each other four times and each time these were filled to their full capacity. However, the passenger trains have been discontinued for the last few years and instead of these trains a single bogie bus train is being introduced. Thus people of this area are facing a lot of inconvenience due to this. The road which is going just parallel to this line is not at all enough to meet the transport requirement of the people. Although some private buses and tempos are operating on this route but they are charging exorbitant fare from the poor people. But even after paying more amount, buses or tempos are not available in this area. These people have to go either to Gazipur or to Jaunpur for the purchase of their day to day requirements. Even they have to go to the courts of these towns for seeking justice. For want of adequate transport facility and inconvenience caused as a result thereof they are not able to reach courts in time. Consequently, they have to bear great loss and they have to face a lot of inconvenience even to attend marriage ceremonies.

We, therefore, submit this petition before you and request your goodself that the railway transport which is no match to other means of transport in this area may please be restored here immediately. It would be befitting to add here that both these junctions should be converted into broad gauge. The total distance between these two junctions is about 70 kilometres which is a long distance and five major stations and a number of halts fall on this route.

And your petitioners as in duty bound shall ever pray.

Name	Address	Signature or thumb impression
Shri Anil Kumar Singh, Lecturer	Deptt. of Psychology Shri Ganeshrai Graduate College, Dobhi (U.P.)	Sd/-
Shri Ram Avadh Singh	Domi Kerakat, Jaunpur, (U.P.)	Sd/-

Counter signed by Shri Tufani Saroj, M.P.

LOK SABHA
PETITION No. 4

(Presented to Lok Sabha on 15.3.2000)

To

Lok Sabha,
New Delhi.

The humble petition of Shri Pramod Shiravalkar, MLA and others of Chembur, Mumbai (Maharashtra).

SHEWETH:

We, the undersigned petitioners, who are staying at Kurla-Chembur, Vasi Naka and Mahul areas of Eastern Suburb of Mumbai, Maharashtra, have to travel four to five kilometres daily to catch local suburban trains in Mumbai. We are residing near Vasinaka, Mahul, Goanpara, Gowthan, Anik, Pinjrapole areas and we do not have any local railway station near our area to travel anywhere in Mumbai or to other parts of Mumbai. We have to depend on local railway to catch local trains. We have to hire an autorickshaw or catch the BEST buses. It is costly as well as time-consuming. To go anywhere in Mumbai for purposes of business or for getting medical assistance we have to travel by local suburban trains.

As there are no passenger railway facility near our residential area, we have to spend almost sixty to ninety minutes daily to reach at the railway station. Our monthly budget also get increased by Rs. 500/- per month as we have to catch the other mode of transport to catch the local trains to reach the nearest railway station.

There is a Railway goods line from Kurla to Mahul. This seven kilometre railway stretch starts from Kurla and goes up to the eastern end of Mumbai city, *i.e.* the Chembur area. This railway line was laid to facilitate goods transport of Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum and other major industries. At that time no residential complex, tenements and bastis were located in that area and this line was used only for transportation of goods.

In the last 20 years, the population of this area has gone up to around seven lakhs. Opening up of this railway line for passenger train, for suburban train, would be helpful to the poor people of this area. The train starting from CST terminus comes up to Kurla and this train can be extended to Mahul.

We, therefore, submit this petition before you and request you to urge upon the Railway authorities to convert this goods line into a goods-passenger traffic line for the convenience of the residents of Vasinaka, Mahul, Anik and Bandra.

And your petitioners as in duty bound shall ever pray.

Name	Address	Signature or thumb impression
Shri Pramod Shirvalkar, MLA (Maharashtra)	Tilak Nagar, Chembur Mumbai	Sd/-
Shri Vithal Kharatmol, Municipal Councillor (Mumbai)	Chembur, Mumbai	Sd/-

Counter signed by Shri Kirit Somaiya, M.P.