

Title: Need to provide gauge conversion work between Bijapur and Gadag via Bagalkot in Karnataka.

SHRI R.S. PATIL (BAGALKOT): Madam, the conversion of meter gauge railway line into broad gauge between Bijapur and Gadag *via* Bagalkot has been pending for the last twenty years. Bagalkot is the central place in Northern Karnataka not only geographically but also in all other respects. Hospet is a very important centre of industry (steel industry) in Karnataka which is yet to be connected with Bagalkot and Bijapur by railway line. At present all the materials that are essential for this centre of industry, Hospet, are being transported from Bagalkot and Bijapur only by road. This is not only a strenuous exercise but also a costly and time-consuming one. In fact, one MoU was signed in this regard between Karnataka Government and the Railways, but there is no progress.

I, therefore, urge upon the hon. Railway Minister to take up the gauge conversion work between Bijapur and Gadag *via* Bagalkot without any further delay.