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**STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON DEFENCE  
(2009-2010)**

**FIFTEENTH LOK SABHA**

**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**

**CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS IN THE BORDER  
AREAS OF THE COUNTRY**

**EIGHTH REPORT**



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI**

*August, 2010/Sravana, 1932 (Saka)*

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE  
(2009-2010)

(FIFTEENTH LOK SABHA)

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CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS IN THE BORDER  
AREAS OF THE COUNTRY

*Presented to Lok Sabha on 19.8.2010*  
*Laid in Rajya Sabha on 19.8.2010*



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI

*August, 2010/Sravana, 1932 (Saka)*

**C.O.D. No. 118**

*Price : Rs. 117.00*

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Published under Rule 382 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha (Fourteenth Edition) and printed by Jainco Art India, New Delhi-110 005.

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COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON DEFENCE (2009-10)

Shri Satpal Maharaj — *Chairman*

MEMBERS

*Lok Sabha*

2. Shri Harish Choudhary
3. Shri Kamal Kishor 'Commando'
4. Shri H.D. Devegowda
5. Shri Varun Gandhi
6. Dr. Sucharu Ranjan Haldar
7. Shri Ramesh Jigajinagi
8. Shri Kapil Muni Karwaria
9. Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal\*
10. Shri Asaduddin Owaisi
11. Dr. Prasanna Kumar Patasani
12. Shri A.T. Nana Patil
13. Shri Bhaskarrao Bapurao Patil
14. Shri C.R. Patil\*\*
15. Shri Amarnath Pradhan
16. Shri C. Rajendran
17. Shri M. Raja Mohan Reddy
18. Shri Bajuram Riyan
19. Shri Iyyaraj Singh
20. Shri Kalyan Singh
21. Shri Mahabali Singh
22. Shri Rajkumari Ratna Singh

*Rajya Sabha*

23. Shri R.K. Dhawan\*\*\*\*
24. Prof. P.J. Kurien
25. Shri Mukut Mithi

(iv)

26. Shri Prakash Javadekar\*\*\*\*\*
27. Shri K.B. Shanappa
28. Shri T.K. Rangarajan
29. Shri Munquad Ali
30. Shri M.V. Mysura Reddy
31. Smt. Shobhana Bhartia\*\*\*
32. Shri Sanjay Raut\*\*\*\*\*

SECRETARIAT

- |                               |   |                          |
|-------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Shri T.K. Mukherjee        | — | <i>Joint Secretary</i>   |
| 2. Smt. Sudesh Luthra         | — | <i>Director</i>          |
| 3. Shrimati Jyochanamay Sinha | — | <i>Deputy Secretary</i>  |
| 4. Shri Rahul Singh           | — | <i>Committee Officer</i> |

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\* Ceased to be member of the Committee *w.e.f.* 21.06.2010.

\*\* Joined the Committee *w.e.f.* 21.06.2010.

\*\*\* Ceased to be member of the Committee *w.e.f.* 29.06.2010.

\*\*\*\* Ceased to be member of the Committee *w.e.f.* 07.07.2010.

\*\*\*\*\* Ceased to be member of the Committee *w.e.f.* 04.07.2010.

\*\*\*\*\* Resigned from the membership of the Committee *w.e.f.* 27.07.2010.

## INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Defence (2009-10), having been authorised by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present this Eighth Report of the Standing Committee on Defence (2009-10) on 'Construction of Roads in the Border Areas of the Country'.

2. The Committee took evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Environment and Forests on 21 July 2010.

3. The Draft Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on 17 August 2010.

4. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the officers of the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Environment and Forests for appearing before the Committee and furnishing the material and information which the Committee desired in connection with the examination of the subject.

5. For facility of reference and convenience, the recommendations I observations of the Committee have been printed in bold letters in Part-II of the report.

NEW DELHI;  
17 August, 2010  
26 Sravana, 1932 (Saka)

SATPAL MAHARAJ,  
Chairman,  
Standing Committee on Defence.

# **REPORT**

## **PART I**

### **CHAPTER I**

#### **INTRODUCTORY**

India is strategically located *vis-a-vis* both Continental Asia and the Indian Ocean Region. It has a landmass of 3.3 million square Kms. India has 14,880 Kms. long land border running through 92 districts in 17 States and share with seven neighbouring countries viz. Afghanistan, Pakistani, Bangladesh, Myanmar, China, Bhutan and Nepal. This unique strategic location poses unique challenges to our Armed Forces, paramilitary forces and State Governments for the effective management of borders.

1.2 A Group of Ministers was set up by the Prime Minister primarily to consider the recommendation of the Kargil Review Committee. Chapter V of the Report of the Group of Ministers on Reforming the National Security System' is exclusively devoted to border management. The important observations made in the report in this regard are as under:—

“The proper management of borders is vitally important for national security. Different portions of our extensive borders have a variety of problems specific to them, which have to be appropriately addressed. These problems have become aggravated in recent times with Pakistan's policy of cross border terrorism, alongwith its intense hostile .Anti-India propaganda designed to mislead and sway the loyalties of border population. The intensification of cross border terrorism. targeted to destabilize India, has thrown up new challenges for our border management policy.

India-Nepal border has change over a period of time with the increasing activities of Pakistan's Inter-services Intelligence (ISI) in Nepal, These security concerns need to be addressed urgently.

The offensive agenda of Pakistan's ISI to promote international terrorism and subvert India is expected to intensify. The J&K cauldron is expected to continue, Vigor-Jus efforts are on to revive



militancy in Punjab. Insurgent groups in different parts of the country are receiving support and encouragement, Illegal infiltration and smuggling of arms and explosives, narcotics and counterfeit currency are pressing' problems. The porosity of our borders, in many parts, makes the task of anti-national forces that much easier. All this underscores the need for utmost vigilance on the borders and strengthening the border guarding forces.

Since many of our borders are man-made artificial boundaries and not based on natural features such as rivers, watersheds etc, they are extremely porous and easy to cross.

x x x

Free movement across the Indo-Myanmar border has been the practice from times immemorial due to the ethnic and cultural similarity in the areas adjoining the border. Illegal trade activities in a variety of contraband items flourish at Moreh on the Indo-Myanmar border.

x x x

The border areas on both sides of the Indo-Bhutan border do not have basic infrastructure such as communication, roads, health, education, drinking water facilities etc. These areas are often used as sanctuaries by the insurgent groups of the North East particularly the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB)."

1.3 The various concerns expressed by the Group of Ministers with regard to border management are being addressed by the Government at various levels. Construction of border roads is one of the important areas for the effective border management as adequate roads are essential for effective patrolling along the border. The Committee during the course of examination of Demands for Grants 2010-11 had noted that a lot of efforts are being made by the Government for augmentation of the defence structure of India's border. However, certain hurdles in construction of border roads like forest and wildlife clearances are being faced. Further the Committee during the recent study visit undertaken in the month of June, 2010 to Leh, Srinagar and some border areas have noted that construction and maintenance of border roads I tunnels and infrastructure are affected due to many factors such as lack of adequate funds, capability constraints, Inadequate airlifting facility, pending forest/wildlife clearance, overall increase in the quantum of work being entrusted to

Border Road Organisation (BRO). In the aforesaid background, the Committee have selected the subject 'Construction of Roads in border areas of the country' for detailed examination and report to the House. The various aspects related to the subject have been examined in detail after detailed deliberations with the representatives of the Ministry of Defence, BRO and representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, the details of which are given in the subsequent chapters of the report.

## CHAPTER II

### CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF BORDER ROADS—PRESENT SCENARIO

As per the information furnished by the Ministry of Defence total length of border areas and the length of such roads State-wise are as under:

“(a) India-China Border: Total length is 3488 Km. State-wise break up is as under:—

|                                                                                                      |   |                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| J&K                                                                                                  | — | 1597 Kms.         |
| Himachal Pradesh                                                                                     | — | 201 Kms.          |
| Uttarakhand                                                                                          | — | 344 Kms.          |
| Sikkim                                                                                               | — | 220 Kms.          |
| Arunachal Pradesh                                                                                    | — | 1126 Kms.         |
| (b) India-Nepal Border                                                                               | — | 1751 Kms.         |
| (c) India-Bhutan Border                                                                              | — | 699 Kms.          |
| (d) India-Myanmar Border                                                                             | — | 1643 Kms.         |
| (e) India-Bangladesh Border                                                                          | — | 4096.7 Kms.       |
| (f) India-Pakistan Border                                                                            | — | Details as under: |
| J&K—208.8 Km. of International Border (IB), 772.1 Kms. of Line of Control (LC) and 121 Kms. of AGPL. |   |                   |
| Punjab                                                                                               | — | 553 Kms.          |
| Rajasthan                                                                                            | — | 1037 Kms.         |
| Gujarat                                                                                              | — | 508 Kms.          |

2.2 When enquired about the total length of borders accessible by roads, the Ministry in its written reply has stated as under:—

“The western borders of the country along the State of J&K (Plains), Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat are reasonably well connected and fairly accessible. However, the Northern and Eastern borders are not as well connected and there is a requirement of improving accessibility by construction of border roads. Various road construction schemes under the Central and State Governments are in progress to achieve the same.”

2.3 When enquired about the position of accessibility of posts of Army, the following information was made available to the Committee by the Ministry:

“As per present Border Management Posture, the Army occupies posts along the Line of Control (LC) & AGPL with Pakistan and Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China. The International Border (IB) with neighbouring countries is manned by various Para Military Forces (PMFs). Army posts exist along the LC and LAC to meet our National Security requirements. The number and location of posts are regularly reviewed keeping in view the operation situation.

x x x

While the posts along our Western borders are generally accessible by roads (less the Kutch area and mountainous areas of J&K), the accessibility to the posts along the Northern and Eastern borders needs tremendous improvement. Various schemes and projects under the Central and State Governments have been initiated to improve connectivity to these posts.”

#### **Construction of Border Roads by different neighbouring Countries**

2.4 When asked to furnish the details of construction of roads being undertaken by different neighbouring countries in the border areas, the Ministry responded as under:—

“Ministry does not have full details of construction of roads in all neighbouring countries on the border. However, it is learnt that roads are being constructed by neighbouring countries on border.”

2.5 While elaborating on the tasks undertaken by BRO with regard to construction of infrastructure in border areas, the Secretary during the course of oral evidence submitted as under:

“So far, BRO has constructed about 48,000 Kms. of roads, 360 major permanent bridges and 19 airfields. In the last few years, there has been an increased focus on BRO because there is a feeling that our neighbouring country, China has been able to build up very good infrastructure. Therefore, we also have to ensure that we are able to build a comparative infrastructure.”

With regard to the steps initiated by the Ministry to increase the infrastructure on the borders particularly in the context of road

construction activities being undertaken by the neighbouring countries, the Committee have been apprised that more allocation of fund, deployment of more manpower/units and providing of more equipments/plants and vehicles are the main steps taken by the Government.

2.6 On slow pace of construction of border roads, a representative of BRO submitted as under:—

“It would not be incorrect to say that two years back the philosophy of our nation was that we should not make roads as near to the border as possible. That philosophy is telling today very clearly as to why we do not have roads. It is only two or three years back that we suddenly decided a change of philosophy and said no, we must go as far forward as possible. It is going to take time. Unfortunately, the time cannot be compressed. Whatever we can do, it will take time. Probably the time that we are taking may be one of the least that could be taken by any other agency like PWD.”

#### **Border Fencing**

2.7 When asked to furnish the details of the target and achievement of border fencing in all the border areas during the last five years, the Ministry has stated as under:—

“.....works of border fencing are ensured by the Ministry of Home Affairs. As far as BRO is concerned, 338 Kms. of border fencing has been constructed along Bangladesh border on behalf of Ministry of Home Affairs.”

## **CHAPTER III**

### **ORGANISATION RESPONSIBLE FOR CONSTRUCTION OF BORDER ROADS**

#### **The role of Border Roads Organisation in construction of infrastructure/roads in border areas**

##### **In Peace**

To develop and maintain the operational road infrastructure for armed forces in the border areas.

To contribute to the socio-economic development of the nation through road and bridge connectivity with specific reference to the border States.

##### **In War**

To develop & maintain roads to keep the lines of communication open in original and re-deployed sectors for the armed forces.

To execute additional tasks as laid down by the govt contributing to the war effort.

3.2 The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) was conceived and raised in the year 1960 by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India with the aim of speedy development of road network and infrastructure in the Northern and North Eastern Border areas of the country. The Organisation, conceived primarily as a road building agency in the early sixties, has over the years, spread its wings and diversified into a large spectrum of construction and development works comprising road projects, bridging and tunnelling. With a humble beginning with two projects in 1960, Vartak in East and Beacon in the North, today, there are 17 Projects spread across the length and breadth of the country.

3.3 This elite Organisation which celebrated its Golden Jubilee on 07 May 2010 is now regarded as a symbol of Nation Building, National Integration and an inseparable component in maintaining the security and integrity of the Nation. As part of its contribution to strengthening bonds of friendship with neighbouring countries, BRO has developed road infrastructure in Bhutan, Myanmar and Afghanistan.

3.4 The vision of BRO is (i) to support the armed forces to meet their strategic needs by committed, dedicated and cost effective development and sustenance of the infrastructure, (ii) to attain leadership in development, adoption, assimilation and use of state of the art technology and (iii) to focus on core competencies, ensure highest level of skill and proficiency in construction activity. 3.5

As per the information furnished by the Ministry of Defence, BRO also works for the following Ministries/Government Agencies other than Ministry of Defence:—

- (a) Ministry of Road Transport & Highways.
- (b) Ministry of Home Affairs.
- (c) Ministry of External Affairs.
- (d) Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region.
- (e) Ministry of Commerce.
- (f) Works Assigned by Planning Commission.
- (g) State/UT Government Works.
- (h) National Highway Authority of India.
- (i) Public Sector Undertakings/Autonomous bodies.”

3.6 The Committee during the study-visit to Leh and Srinagar have been informed that there has been an overall increase in the quantum of work entrusted to BRO. This has led to a situation wherein within the present capability, the planned quantum of GS works in beyond the capabilities of BRO to deliver in the given time frame. When asked about the comments, Ministry of Defence while admitting that there has been an increase in the works entrusted to BRO in recent past, has stated that the capabilities building of BRO is under process and is being augmented by outsourcing works in the areas where it is feasible. Ministry of Defence has further stated that the works being assigned to BRO by various Ministries/Agencies under different programmes are basically intended to develop the induction routes to the borders as also to keep them traffic worthy at all times for the movement of the Army. Thus the works are complementary to the requirement of the Armed Forces, thereby not necessarily diluting the main role of BRO.

## CHAPTER IV

### PLANNING FOR CONSTRUCTION OF BORDER ROADS

#### Long Term Perspective Plan (LTPP1 & LTPP2)

The Border Roads Organization has made Long Term Perspective Plan (LTPP) for construction of roads. The details regarding the total number of roads Targeted, completed, work in progress and roads in which work is yet to be started as per the information furnished by the Ministry of Defence are as under:—

| Programme          | Total Scope  |                 |                 | Completed    |                 |                 | Work in Progress |                 |                 | Balance      |                 |                 |
|--------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                    | No. of Roads | Length of Roads | Scope (Rs. Cr.) | No. of Roads | Length of Roads | Scope (Rs. Cr.) | No. of Roads     | Length of Roads | Scope (Rs. Cr.) | No. of Roads | Length of Roads | Scope (Rs. Cr.) |
| LTPP-I             | 116          | 3765            | 9200            | 6            | 98              | 392             | 52               | 2125            | 4449            | 58           | 1542            | 4359            |
| GS OTHER THAN LTPP | 83           | 3774            | 3316            | 7            | 137             | 12              | 60               | 2981            | 2664            | 16           | 656             | 640             |
| ICBRS              | 61           | 3394            | 6549            | 14           | 556             | 351             | 42               | 2653            | 5521            | 5            | 184             | 677             |
| PM Package         | 7            | 1124            | 2159            | 2            | 32              | 77              | 5                | 1092            | 2082            | -            | -               | -               |
| SARDP-NE           | 10           | 1043            | 3662            | -            | -               | -               | 9                | 801             | 2477            | 1            | 242             | 1185            |
| Total              | 277          | 13100           | 24886           | 29           | 823             | 832             | 168              | 9652            | 17193           | 80           | 2624            | 6861            |
| LTPP-II            | 241          | 8538            | 15255           | 0            | 0               | 0               | 11               | 876             | 1391            | 230          | 7662            | 131164          |
| ALP PKG            | 5            | 812             | 3600            | -            | -               | -               | 1                | 140             | 727             | 4            | 672             | 2873            |
| NH                 | 15           | 3344            | 3928            | -            | 575             | 2000            | 15               | 3344            | 1928            | -            | -               | -               |
| Strategic          | 18           | 1804            | 1523            | 3            | 55              | 77              | 10               | 574             | 663             | 5            | 1175            | 783             |
| Works Abroad       | 2            | 359             | 962             | -            | 100             | 350             | 2                | 259             | 612             | -            | -               | -               |
| Grand Total        | 558          | 27957           | 50154           | 32           | 1553            | 3259            | 207              | 14845           | 22514           | 319          | 12133           | 24381           |

4.2 The details with regard to the major programmes under execution in BRO and physical and financial achievement during last five years as provided by the Ministry of Defence are as under:—

| Sl.No. | Programme                      | Funding agency                          | No. of roads                                       | Length of roads in km. | Cost (Rs. in Cr.) |
|--------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1      | 2                              | 3                                       | 4                                                  | 5                      | 6                 |
| 1.     | Indo-China Border Roads (ICBR) | 13-Ministry of Defence, 33-GS, 15- MHA. | 61<br>*Total 73, 12 ITBP roads with other agencies | 3429                   | 4920              |



| 1     | 2                                                                                                 | 3                                        | 4   | 5       | 6     |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-----|---------|-------|
| 2.    | Special Accelerated Road Development Programme—North East (SARDP-NE)                              | MORT&H                                   | 10  | 1023    | 3501  |
| 3.    | Prime Minister's Reconstruction Plan for J&K(PMRP)                                                | GS, Ministry of Defence<br>MORT&H & SHEP | 7   | 1124    | 2159  |
| 4.    | Rohtang Tunnel                                                                                    | Ministry of Defence                      |     | 8.802   | 1458  |
| 5.    | Strategic Roads                                                                                   | MORT&H                                   | 18  | 1780    | 1523  |
| 6.    | Arunachal Package & Trans Arunachal Highway (NH 229)                                              | MORT&H                                   | 5+1 | 812+232 | 4000  |
| 7.    | National Highway—Double Lining [NH(O)]                                                            | MORT&H                                   | 21  | 5231    | 4928  |
| 8.    | General Staff -Long Term Perspective Plan Priority-I (Gs L TPP-I) and other General Staff ongoing | GS                                       | 126 | 3323    | 4980  |
| 9.    | Andaman & Nicobar Works                                                                           | Planning COM                             | 02  | 46.45   |       |
| 10.   | Works in other Countries                                                                          | MEA                                      | 02  | 359     | 962   |
| Total |                                                                                                   |                                          | 253 | 17875   | 28431 |

#### 4.3 Physical and Financial Achievements of Five Years BRO.

| Item of Work           | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2009-10 | TGT<br>2010-11 |
|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Formation cutting      | 1140    | 1135    | 1589    | 1693    | 3027           |
| Permanent works        | 607     | 734     | 770     | 1248    | 2318           |
| Surfacing works        | 1909    | 2244    | 3054    | 3303    | 5449           |
| Major Bridges          | 2396    | 3202    | 4017    | 3017    | 5846           |
| Resurfacing            | 2563    | 2544    | 2663    | 2349    | 2272           |
| Financial (Rs. in Cr.) | 2148    | 2603    | 3304    | 4205    | 6021           |

4.4 The Secretary, while elaborating about status of LTPP I&II during the course of oral evidence stated as under:—

“LTPP will be completed in 2012. The planning is being done for LTPP II. LTPP I is the one that has the priority to the Army and it is scheduled for completion in 2012. Most of these roads will be completed by 2012, except some where certain amount of forest and air effort would be required or it is a very difficult area and mutually we have said that it may not be completed by 2012. LTPP II is the one which was given to us just this year itself. Formulation of this was done this year. The planning is going on. It will take another year or two to plan and it has to be completed by 2022. So, we have time. The planning has already started. It is not the scarcity of equipment. It is the total capability of the BRO because in any case even if we increase it further we cannot deploy further in those areas.

It is not feasible to deploy additional people for working per Km. Wherever we need to be deployed, more land is not available even for deployment. So, those issues are being tackled. We are actually at an optimum level at this point of time. Beyond this it may not be working out with any further advantage.”

#### Construction of Tunnels

4.5 The details of tunnels under construction/feasibility study as furnished by the Ministry of Defence are as under:—

| Sl. No. | Project      | Name of Tunnel | Length | Cost Cr                       | Present Position                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------|--------------|----------------|--------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.      | Rohtang (HP) | Rohtang        | 8.80   | 1495.00                       | The foundation stone laying ceremony for construction of tunnel was done by Smt. Sonia Gandhi Hon'ble Chairperson of NAC on 28 Jun 2010 at South portal of Rohtang Tunnel.                          |
| 2.      | Beacon (J&K) | Zojila         | 12.00  | 29.98 (for feasibility study) | Contract awarded to M/s iBiit Technologies on 29 Apr 09 A period of one and half year has (J&K) been allowed in bid for feasibility study and submission of feasibility report. Work is in progress |
| 3.      | Beacon       | Z-Morh         | 3.10   |                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

The Ministry of Defence has further stated that BRO has no expertise in tunnel construction. About 6-7 officers are being trained for this purpose. Internationally reputed contractors/consultants (at Rohtang Tunnel) have been engaged to execute the work and the budget for construction of tunnels does not have a separate budget head.

4.6 When enquired about the probable date of completion of Rohtang tunnel, the representative of the Ministry of Defence, during oral evidence stated that it would be completed in 2015.

#### **Coordination between Ministry of Defence/BRO and State Governments and interface with public**

4.7 About the existing mechanism available to coordinate between the Ministry/BRO and State Governments in the context of construction of roads in border areas, the Ministry has stated as under:—

“Ministry of Defence conducts regular review meetings with the representatives of State Governments. Secondly, Cabinet Secretariat/PMO also organises co-ordination meetings of officials of Ministry of Defence, BRO and State Government. Thirdly, Ministries and BRO’s officials also visit State Government in order to resolve pending issues. Fourthly, BRDB meeting are 10 organised in different Project Headquarters which are situated in different States where intensive interaction with their representatives take place. Finally, through letter or phone, officials of states are contacted for resolving issues.”

4.8 With regard to the interface between Army/BRO and the civilians in border areas, the Committee have been informed that the alignment is generally made to connect maximum villages in the border areas. Civil Military Liaison Conference is held between the Army and the State Governments from time to time. The Ministry of Defence has further informed that the request of the States and the public leaders whenever received through any correspondence is also considered for infrastructure to meet the expectations of local people.

#### **Maintenance of border areas**

4.9 Regarding maintenance of border roads, the Ministry has stated as under:—

“BRO gets yearly maintenance grant for regular maintenance of roads on following scales:

- (a) Scale-I Maintenance at the rate of Rs. 64,400 per Km in plain area to Rs. 86,700/- per km in High Altitude Area.

- (b) Scale-II Maintenance at the rate of Rs. 52,000/- per Km in plain area to Rs. 67,100/- per km in High Altitude Area.

| Features                                          | Scale-I                   | Scale-II        |
|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Period of closure not to exceed (at a time)       | 07 days                   | 21 days         |
| Authorization of Dozers/Earth removing equipments | 2 Dozers for each Platoon | Not authorized. |

BRO, accordingly, provisions resources to carry out maintenance tasks like pot-hole repair, drain clearance, repair of protective structures and cross drainage works etc.

BRO also carries out land-slide clearance during monsoon to keep the road open and therefore two dozers have been authorized to each road maintenance Platoon.”

4.10 When asked to inform about the steps taken to improve the damaged road conditions in high altitude areas, the representatives of the Ministry of Defence stated:—

“We have special specifications not only for high altitudes but also for places where there are slides, areas where the roads could get damaged due to snow clearances. However, over a period of time, as I had pointed out, because of lack of funding, they always made less specifications to cover greater length of the roads. From this year onwards, we are correcting that and we are going back to the authorised specifications and replacing all those areas with correct specifications. For example, Zozila Pass is on higher specifications and it has withstood last two winters already without damage. We have already told the concerned officials and all the projects are being upgraded with specifications not only in these snow-bound areas but also in regular slide areas and we need to keep clearing them.

Recently, the work of double-lane is going on. Therefore, that road is also under repair. Relaying of the riding surface is going on presently and the sub-base is being redone. That work is already on that entire stretch.

x x x x

Our observation is, that road needs to be upgraded. As DG, BRO was saying, it is being converted into a two-lane road and its specifications are improved so that it becomes a good one. It is not in a very good state, as you rightly pointed out.”

**Induction of Information Technology in Border Areas**

4.11 When asked to state about the efforts being made by BRO to induce Information Technology (IT) to enhance decision making process, keeping pace with Information Technology (IT) in the fast changing era, the Ministry has stated as under:—

“BRO Wide Area Network (BRO-VVAN) is planning for connecting all BRO units for the purpose of sharing of data, voice and video.”

## CHAPTER V

### BUDGETARY ALLOCATION

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRT&H) provides the budget of Border Roads Organisation (BRO) under Demand No. 80.

5.1 The year wise allocation versus expenditure incurred by BRO as furnished by the Ministry of Defence are as under:—

| (Rs. in crore)   |                |                  |                 |
|------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Sl.No.           | Financial Year | Amount allocated | Amount utilized |
| <b>10th Plan</b> |                |                  |                 |
| 1.               | 2002-2003      | 784.22           | 806.64          |
| 2.               | 2003-2004      | 807.56           | 830.48          |
| 3.               | 2004-2005      | 943.00           | 936.41          |
| 4.               | 2005-2006      | 922.26           | 890.87          |
| 5.               | 2006-2007      | 981.00           | 952.55          |
| <b>11th Plan</b> |                |                  |                 |
| 1.               | 2007-2008      | 1100.00          | 1099.13         |
| 2.               | 2008-2009      | 1500.00          | 1535.15         |
| 3.               | 2009-2010      | 2200.00          | 2141.03         |
| 4.               | 2010-2011      | 3000.00          |                 |
| 5.               | 2011-2012      | 3400.00          |                 |

The allocation versus expenditure for the Financial Year 2009-10 is as under:—

| (Rs. in crore) |         |           |         |        |             |
|----------------|---------|-----------|---------|--------|-------------|
| Sl.No.         | Year    | BE Demand | RE      | Expdr  | Surrendered |
| 1.             | 2009-10 | 2920.00   | 2920.00 | 2141.0 | 779.00      |

5.2 The analysis of the aforesaid data indicates that during Tenth Plan, there was underutilisation of allocation from the year 2004-05 to 2006-07. Against the allocation of Rs. 2846.26 crore during these three years, BRa could spend only Rs. 2779.83 crore, thus under spending being Rs. 66.43 crore. During Eleventh plan also, there was under utilisation of funds during the years 2007-08 and 2009-10. Against the allocation of Rs. 1100 crore in the year 2007-08, BRa could spend Rs. 1099.13 crore. Again during the year 2009-10, against the allocation of Rs. 2200 crore, BRa could spend only Rs. 2141.03 crore. During the Year 2009-10, BE and RE was Rs. 2920 and the expenditure was Rs. 2141 crore, as such the surrendered amount was Rs. 779.00 crore.

5.3 The Ministry in the written note explained that the under spending during the year 2009-10 was due to the following reasons:—

- (i) "Additional funds were allotted only in the month of July 2009 due to delay in the passing of the General Budget due to General Election. Budget of Rs. 1569 crore against GS budget was allotted during the BE. Restriction of 1/3rd of the allotted BE budget was imposed for expenditure till the General budget is passed in the parliament. Therefore the delay in procurement of construction stores restricted the final expenditure.
- (ii) Inadequate Air effort.
- (iii) Non finalization of land acquisition and Forest clearance".

5.4 In this connection, the Secretary, Ministry of Defence further clarified the position as under:—

"That was right in the beginning. The funds were allocated late. The work season in certain areas is not round the year. We operate in mountainous routes. In some areas, during winter months we just cannot work there. So, the work season for the BRa is not 12 months. I may submit that it is no consolation for us. It is our territory and we are committed to build and this is a special focus area of the Government."

5.5 The representative of BRO further added during the course of oral evidence:—

"Last year actually there were two surrenders. One was in the initial stages when I took over as DGBR and when I carried appreciation about Rs. 700 crore and odd crore were initially declared by me that we will not be able to spend for the simple

reason that it had been given to us somewhere in August-September. So, in the process that we started, it was not feasible for that process to finish by the time March came. Therefore, I very categorically said that we are not in a position to do this. Out of the balance of the funding, we have spent 98 per cent of the funds. Two per cent of the funds we were not able to spend. That was a pragmatic calculation by us right at the beginning and we could not fully utilise the funds because of various reasons, like the elections were there and we were told not to spend and therefore, funding came late."

5.6 Defence Secretary further stated as under:—

"Actually the Budget could not be passed and there was a ceiling of 25 per cent on expenditure and the Cabinet was not sanctioning any new scheme because of this. The Budget was passed by the Government after the new Lok Sabha was constituted."

5.7 The Secretary, Ministry of Defence further added as under:—

"Yes, it does need improvement. We recognise that. That is why the Government is focussing on it. If you see the level of expenditure that has been allocated in the last three years, you will find that the expenditure continuously is increasing. The target for the current year from Rs. 4,000 crore has been increased to Rs. 6,000 crore. Special drives have been there to increase the manpower. Whatever is possible is being done. But the fact of the matter is that if the roads are not built for several years, then they cannot be built overnight. There are pockets where we need to upgrade. There are issues of acquisition of forest and wildlife clearance, of airlift capability, etc. which the Government is consciously trying to address. The absorption capacity of funds, I would humbly submit, is something that takes time to develop and even if we have unlimited funds, even then you have to get the works done through an organization. What I was trying to submit is that we have done for Rs. 4,000 crore last year which is the highest ever and now we are going to spend Rs. 6,000 crore this year. As far as the troop movement etc. is concerned, I am sure, the hon. Members must have had gone there and I am also aware that a lot of inconvenience was caused to the hon. Members."

x x x

"In the last year, a Committee under the chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary was constituted to see how the functioning of



BRO could be improved. One commitment that the Ministry of Finance gave was that finance would not be a constraint as far as the work of BRO was concerned. It depends on its spending ability and it said that it would provide the funds that are needed.

Ministry of Finance conveyed to us is that whatever funds you require for building the roads is no issue. You would see that we are spending more than 95 per cent and this year again we had a jump to Rs. 6000 crore and the assurance is that if we are able to do more, then we will get more in the RE. Currently, the funds are not an issue but because of the terrain, because of the airlift capability, acquisition problems, forestry and wildlife it is taking time to spend more. That is the issue. Therefore, funds I do not think are an inhibiting factor as far as BRO is concerned currently."

## CHAPTER VI

### CHALLENGES/CONSTRAINTS

During the study visit of the Committee to Leh, Srinagar and some border areas in the month of June 2010, had observed that construction of border roads are facing manifold challenges.

The main impediment in this regard is forest and wild life clearance. On this aspect the Committee during the visit observed as under:

#### **Delay in Forest/wildlife clearance**

“The biggest stumbling block to develop infrastructure in border areas has been the Forest Conservation Act (FCA) 1980 and the Wildlife Protection Act (WPA) 1972 whose various provisions lead to considerable delay in obtaining permission to construct roads as also impose large financial costs. Though the MOEF vide their letter No. 11-11/2005-FC dated 20 March 2006 have laid down that all cases of forest clearance are required to be cleared in a time bound manner within 210 days, the same does not normally happen. The average time taken to clear such cases is two to three years. In certain cases the same has taken almost eight to nine years. At present there are 67 cases of forest clearance which are pending at various levels”.

6.2 Subsequently, when the Ministry was asked about the status of Forests clearance State -wise, the following data pertaining to ICBR cases and non-ICBR cases was furnished by the Ministry.

The details of Forests Clearance of ICBR cases:—

| State             | Final<br>Approval<br>Accorded | Status                                  |                             |                          |                       |                      |              | Proposal<br>not yet<br>Submitted | With<br>Project | FC<br>not<br>required | Total |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------|
|                   |                               | Approval<br>in<br>Principle<br>Accorded | With<br>Regional<br>Officer | With<br>Nodal<br>Officer | With<br>State<br>Auth | With<br>CEC/<br>NBWL | With<br>MOEF |                                  |                 |                       |       |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 39                            | 10                                      | 3                           | 4                        | 1                     | —                    | —            | 4                                | 1               | 1                     | 63    |
| Uttarakhand       | 17                            | 1                                       | —                           | —                        | —                     | —                    | —            | —                                | —               | —                     | 18    |
| Jammu and Kashmir | 2                             | 1                                       | —                           | —                        | —                     | —                    | —            | —                                | —               | 10                    | 13    |
| Sikkim            | 2                             | —                                       | —                           | —                        | —                     | 1                    | —            | —                                | —               | —                     | 4     |
| Himachal Pradesh  | 6                             | 1                                       | 1                           | —                        | 3                     | —                    | —            | —                                | —               | —                     | 11    |
| Total             | 66                            | 13                                      | 4                           | 5                        | 4                     | 1                    | —            | 4                                | 1               | 11                    | 109   |

## The details of FC cases of non-ICBR:—

| State             | Final<br>Approval<br>Accorded | Status                                  |                             |                          |                       |                      |              | Proposal<br>not yet<br>Submitted | With<br>Project | FC<br>not<br>required | Total |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------|
|                   |                               | Approval<br>in<br>Principle<br>Accorded | With<br>Regional<br>Officer | With<br>Nodal<br>Officer | With<br>State<br>Auth | With<br>CEC/<br>NBWL | With<br>MOEF |                                  |                 |                       |       |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 14                            | 13                                      | 2                           | 3                        | 4                     | —                    | —            | —                                | —               | —                     | 36    |
| Uttarakhand       | 7                             | —                                       | 2                           | —                        | 1                     | —                    | —            | —                                | —               | 1                     | 24    |
| Punjab            | 2                             | —                                       | —                           | —                        | —                     | —                    | —            | —                                | —               | —                     | 2     |
| Chhattisgarh      | 1                             | —                                       | —                           | —                        | —                     | —                    | —            | —                                | —               | —                     | 1     |
| Mizoram           | 2                             | 1                                       | —                           | —                        | 3                     | —                    | —            | 2                                | —               | 1                     | 9     |
| Manipur           | 1                             | 2                                       | 1                           | 1                        | 4                     | —                    | —            | —                                | —               | —                     | 9     |
| Rajasthan         | —                             | 1                                       | —                           | —                        | —                     | —                    | —            | —                                | —               | —                     | 1     |
| J&K               | 14                            | 23                                      | 2                           | —                        | 19                    | —                    | —            | —                                | —               | —                     | 58    |
| Sikkim            | 4                             | —                                       | —                           | —                        | 14                    | —                    | —            | —                                | —               | —                     | 18    |
| Himachal Pradesh  | 5                             | 3                                       | 2                           | —                        | 5                     | —                    | —            | —                                | —               | 5                     | 20    |
| Tripura           | —                             | —                                       | —                           | —                        | 4                     | —                    | —            | —                                | —               | —                     | 4     |
| West Bengal       | —                             | 1                                       | —                           | —                        | 12                    | —                    | —            | —                                | —               | —                     | 13    |
| Total             | 50                            | 44                                      | 9                           | 7                        | 76                    | 0                    | 0            | 2                                | 0               | 7                     | 195   |

6.3 The Ministry of Environment and Forests while elaborating about the process of forests clearance furnished the following information:-

“1. The process of forest clearance may be summarized as below:

- (i) The proposal is submitted by the concerned State/Union Territory Government seeking prior approval of the Central Government (Ministry of Environment and Forests).
- (ii) Proposals involving more than 40 ha of forest land are sent to the Ministry of Environment and Forests at New Delhi.
- (iii) Proposals involving forest land up to 40 ha are sent to the concerned Regional Offices of the Ministry of Environment and forests. These offices are situated at Shillong, Lucknow, Chandigarh, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar and Bangalore.
- (iv) In the Ministry of Environment and Forests at New Delhi, the proposal is examined by the Forest Advisory Committee

(FAC) constituted under Section-3 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. The decision is taken by the Competent Authority (MEF) on the basis of the recommendations of the Forest Advisory Committee. On receipt of the compliance report from the State Government, these are scrutinized by the concerned AIG and thereafter, with the approval of the IGF, final approval to the proposal is conveyed to the State Government.

- (v) In the Regional Offices of the Ministry, the proposals are examined by the State Advisory Group (SAG) pertaining to the concerned Stated/Union Territory. The recommendations of the SAG are processed in the regional office and note is prepared to obtain the approval of MEF through the Additional DGF, MoEF. Once the approval of the MEF is available on the file, formal order is issued by the concerned Regional office of the Ministry.
- (vi) The Regional Chief Conservator of Forests, who heads the Regional Office, has been empowered to take decisions for the proposals involving forest land up to 5.00 (Five) ha except the proposals related to mining and regularization of encroachment.
- (vii) All proposals for regularization of encroachment are dealt with the Ministry of Environment and Forests at New Delhi irrespective of the area involved.

6.4 According to the Forest (Conservation) Rules, 2003 which are currently in force, the time lines prescribed for different levels are as follows:—

- (i) After receipt of renewal proposals, in the prescribed format and complete in all respects, from the User Agency, 60 days for State/Union Territory Government.
- (ii) After receipt of fresh proposals, in the prescribed format and complete in all respects, from the User Agency, 90 days for State/Union Territory Government.
- (iii) After receipt of the proposals recommended for approval from the State/Union Territory Government, 60 days for the Central Government to take a decision”.

6.5 With regard to the time required for environment clearance from proposal stage to final clearance and average time taken by the

Ministry of Environment and Forests for giving clearance, the Ministry of Defence supplied the following information:—

“The cases have been approved by the MoEF in more than one year on an average. The maximum time is taken for the proposal to reach the Nodal Officer level. The State Government needs to be sensitized as generally delay takes place because non availability of ground staff of revenue/forest department of States. Most of time is wasted in getting staff together for joint survey. Thus the joint survey requires to be expedited and the ground staff particularly the revenue personnel need to be sensitized of the issue”.

6.6 When the aforesaid issue was deliberated at length, the Secretary Environment and Forests during the course of oral evidence stated as under:—

x

x

x

“I do know that we can further reduce the delay. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind. Without getting into the element of which department is responsible and to what extent of the delay, let me say that basically I would describe the delay as systemic.

There is a clear division of labour that this is what the Ministry of Environment and Forests should do and this is what the user agency has to do. Let me make some very clear general comments which are also pointed at the same time.

The first reason for the delay is, when we do the joint surveys, these are done by the user agencies that are the department building the roads, the forest department and the revenue department. Why are these surveys done? They are conducted for examining the feasibility of the road alignment, the road linkage and then also to very clearly determine that this is the forest land, this is the revenue land and whether we can change the alignment so as to save the forest and change the alignment so as to ensure that it does not pass through a protected area. As the Defence Secretary stated, the working period at the altitude is also very limited.

I may describe the delay as a needless delay. If we have done the survey, then I would suggest to the user agency that without waiting for the final approvals, the administrative approvals, without waiting for their internal clearances, they could send their

projects to us, but in the meanwhile we could have a parallel process of clearing the projects from the forest point of view so that to that extent we can save some time because, as I mentioned also, looking into the systemic aspect, without really apportioning as to which department is responsible to what extent of the delay.

Thirdly, there is always in these large matters sometimes the element of routineness creeps in whether it is on the side of the forest side or on the user agency side like forms not being completed fully etc.”

#### **Initiatives taken by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF)**

6.7 As per the information made available by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) various initiatives as detailed below have been taken to expedite the forests clearance:

- A. For Border roads along the Indo-China Border/Projects of National Security importance.
  - (i) Reduced the processing time from 90 days to 30 days at the State Government level and from 60 days to 30 days at the Central Government level.
  - (ii) The Regional offices of the Ministry were directed to assist/help the officials of the Border Roads in formulating the proposals as and when these officers approach them.
  - (iii) The Chief Secretaries of all the States/UTs including these 5 States have been requested to direct the concerned officers handling the proposals including the Nodal Officer (FCA) to expedite processing of proposals.
  - (iv) The State Governments have been requested to strengthen the institution of the nodal officer (FCA) so that only complete proposals in all respects are forwarded by them to the Central Government. And thus, these do not attract further clarifications from the State Government.
  - (v) The concerned State/UT Governments have been requested to advise the Divisional Commissioners for coordinating such proposals at the State Government level so that delays are curtailed.
  - (vi) The workshops/seminars have been organized at Shillong and Dehradun to share information on project/proposal formulation to the officers of the BRO/BRTF etc.

B. Single Window Clearance:

A Committee under the Chairmanship of the Secretary has been constituted for involving a summary procedure for expeditious clearances in respect of strategic Border Roads projects. The Committee after detailed deliberations held on 08.06. 2010 took the following decision:

- (1) MoEF will simplify and design integrated format for application under FCA 1980 and WLPA 1972.
- (2) Single Window will be established at 3 levels, viz., MoEF, level, State Forest Department Head Quarters and at DFO level in districts. This will be manned by MoEF/Ministry of Defence /BRO.
- (3) Application involving wildlife areas will be processed simultaneously with forest clearance process.
- (4) The procedure and time line as decided in this meeting will be implemented by all concerned Ministries.
- (5) State Government may be requested to authorize the nodal officer under FC Act to finalize and forward FC Act proposals with the approval of the Minister without going through the process of sending these cases for processing at State Government once again.

6.8 While apprising the follow up on the aforesaid, the Ministry in the written note stated as under.

- (i) Integrated format for application under the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980 and the Wildlife conservation Act 1972 have already been prepared.
- (ii) Single Window at 3 levels, viz., MoEF, State Forest Departments Headquarters have been established.
- (iii) Further, the State Government has been requested to keep a watch on time lines prescribed on proposals.
- (iv) Applications involving wildlife areas will now be processed simultaneously.
- (v) The first meeting of the Single Window established at the MoEF level was held on 12.07.2010.

6.9 The Ministry of Environment and Forests further apprised the Committee about various other initiatives taken by them in this regard, the details of which are as under:—

- (i) The FAC has been advised to dispose of the minutes of the meeting within two days from the date of receipt of the

draft minutes from the concerned officials and indicate their approval/corrections, if any, by email.

- (ii) All efforts should be made to finalise the minutes of the meeting within a period of 5 days from the date of convening of the meeting of the FAC.
- (iii) The minutes should be processed on the individual case files by the processing officer within two days from the date of receipt of confirmed minutes.
- (iv) The approval of the competent authority on the recommendations of the FAC should be communicated to the concerned State/UT Government within 15 days from the date of convening of the FAC meeting.

#### **Transparency in Processing of clearances**

6.10 The Ministry of Environment and Forests has further submitted that with a view to make the process of environmental and forest clearances transparent, the information required by the Project Proponent, State/UT Governments and NGOs etc. has been put into public domain by putting the data on the website of the Ministry. The data is being updated at a frequency of once every week. The design of the website has been Ministry of Defence ified to make it more user friendly.

6.11 During the oral evidence, Secretary E&F informed the Committee as under:

“..... since 1980 when the Forest Conservation Act came into being, it had a very salutary effect on the health of our forests. Before the Forest Conservation Act, we were diverting about 1,50,000 hectares of forests. Since that Act, it was reduced to 1/5. That is, on an average, since 1980, we have been diverting only 30,000 hectares of forests per annum, from 150,000 hectares, insofar as diversion of forest to non- forestry purposes was concerned. So, the Forest Conservation Act, under which this system is governed from the perspective of our Ministry, it is absolutely a very important pillar. As we go along in the proceedings today, I will make a serious attempt to bring out various measures which we have undertaken to streamline the system, when I hope I will be able to convince the Committee. Border roads do not need environmental clearance under the Environment Protection Act. We are looking at only the forest and wildlife clearance— forest clearance under the Forest Conservation Act and wildlife under the Wildlife Protection Act.”



6.12 On the issue of simultaneously dealing the forest as well as wildlife clearances thereby reducing the time stipulated for both, the Secretary, E&F added:—

“This is our endeavour. However, both the processes are different. Forest clearances is one process and wildlife is other process.”

6.13 He further informed the Committee:—

“We are simplifying and designing an Integrated Format for Application under the Forest Conservation Act and the Wildlife Protection Act. For both the Acts we are designing an Integrated Format, one application.

Secondly, we are establishing single window at three levels - at the Ministry of Environment, at the State Forest Department, and thirdly at the DFO level- where the forest clearance and the wildlife clearance application is given. For that, we have already established that single window system at the Ministry level. I had a meeting. I have the minutes of the meeting. We also have the names who will be the members of that single window. For the State Government, who will be the Members, we have assigned the designation.

For the DFO level, who will be the Members, we have also assigned the designation. Thirdly, the application involving the wildlife areas will be processed simultaneously with the forest clearance process. Fourthly, the procedure and the timelines also we brought out even more definitively which is a matter of detail, which I can read also immediately. I am reducing the time to 60 days, although it is a big challenge. Right now it is 150 days. I know this is a big challenge. This is what we have concluded. We have conveyed it also to the Cabinet Secretariat.”

6.14 The Ministry was asked whether specific provisions are there to reduce time frame for defence land and border roads, a representative of Ministry of Defence stated as under:—

“There is no special dispensation in the Act.”

6.15 In this connection, when asked to state at what level the matter has been taken up with the Ministry of Environment and Forests to clear the proposals in a time bound manner and the reaction

of the Ministry of environment and forests thereof, the Ministry of Defence in the written reply submitted as under:—

“The matter has been raised by the Raksha Rajya Mantri with the Minister of State for Environment and Forests. The steps to mitigate the delay have been taken at the Ministry of Defence level by conducting frequent meetings with the State Forest and MOEF Officials and also conducting meetings with the ground executives at the State level. Two training camps were also organized for the BRO and forest officials to sensitizing for getting the FCIWLC clearance. Recently a decision for three tier single window clearance system has been taken by MOEF, (at MOEF, State forest department and district level). This will take care of the important roads being taken up in the Border areas and ensure that clearances are issued in a time bound manner.”

6.16 Defence Secretary further added as under:—

“I would like to say that this forest and wild life clearance, as you have rightly said, has been identified as one of the key areas where we need to progress and improve if we are to build roads quickly and efficiently. The Cabinet Secretary also had taken a meeting and certain decisions were taken. One idea was that we must have a nodal officer at the State level, in the Ministry of Defence and in the Ministry of Environment. At various levels, a checklist should be given to the nodal officers clearly delineating the responsibility and giving the timeline. We are working closely with the Ministry of Forest and Environment to lay down a path so that we function within the parameters of the Act. We have to work under the law and see how we can compress the timeframe because the law is made by Parliament and we are all bound by it.

There has been a significant focus and improvement on the forestry side. But on the wildlife side, the cases do go to the Supreme Court, and there is an Empowered Committee constituted by the Supreme Court which also addresses some questions on wildlife. This is called the Central Empowered Committee.

The Supreme Court is the highest Court and we are bound to submit to its directions. Sometimes it does take time there. But what we are trying to do is to see that there is no delay. We are requesting the Cabinet Secretariat also to see that coordination takes place.”

6.17 The representative of the Ministry of Defence in this regard further submitted as under:—

“As far as wildlife is concerned, on behalf of the Army, an application has been filed before the hon. Supreme Court that for roads falling within 50 kilometres of the border, wildlife clearance should be dispensed with, and that application is under consideration of the Court at the moment.”

## **2. Increase in quantum of work of BRO**

6.18 During the study visit of the Committee to Leh, Srinagar and border areas, the Committee were informed as under:—

“There has been an overall increase in the quantum of work being entrusted to BRO. This includes not only GS works but also works being undertaken under various schemes like PM reconstruction package for J&K, Special Accelerated Regional Development Program (SARDP) for NE, Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways (MoRT&H) works, Strategic Roads Programme etc. This has led to a situation wherein within the present capability the planned quantum of GS works is beyond the capability of the BRa to deliver in the given time frame”.

6.19 When asked to furnish comments on the aforesaid observation of the Committee, the Ministry has stated as under:—

- “(i) There has been an increase in the works entrusted to BRO in recent past. The re-structuring of the Organisation was sanctioned in Sep. 2006. Since then the raising of units and the induction of manpower is taking place. The capability building is under process and is being augmented by outsourcing works in the areas where it is feasible.
- (ii) The works being assigned to BRO by various Ministries/ Agencies under different programmes are basically intended to develop the induction routes to the Borders as also to keep them traffic worthy at all times for the movement of the Army. Thus the works are complementary to the requirement of the Armed Forces, thereby not necessarily diluting the main role of BRO.
- (iii) The restructuring of the Organisation was approved by the CCS in Sep 2006 and 151 units were sanctioned. Against that so far 127 units have been raised.”

**MANPOWER MANAGEMENT**

6.20 The authorized and existing strength of officers and subordinates in BRO as informed to the Committee by Ministry of Defence are as under:—

| Group                  | Authorised |      |       | Held  |      |       |
|------------------------|------------|------|-------|-------|------|-------|
|                        | Gref       | Army | Total | Gref  | Army | Total |
| Group A&B              | 1343       | 556  | 1899  | 872   | 328  | 1204  |
| <b>Subordinates</b>    |            |      |       |       |      |       |
| Group                  | Authorised |      |       | Held  |      |       |
|                        | Gref       | Army | Total | Gref  | Army | Total |
| Group B (Non Gazetted) | 1612       | 43   | 1655  | 1138  | 33   | 1171  |
| Group C                | 20879      | 2364 | 23243 | 18002 | 2126 | 20128 |
| Group D                | 15257      | 592  | 15849 | 13711 | 569  | 14280 |
| Total                  | 37748      | 2999 | 40747 | 32851 | 2728 | 35579 |

NOTE: Deficiency of 36.6% in officer & 12.7% in Subordinates. Overall Def 13.8%.

6.21 When asked about the initiatives taken by Ministry of Defence/BRO to make good the shortage of officers/staff, Ministry of Defence in the written note stated as under:—

“The Ministry has informed that to make good the shortage especially at subordinates level 8,136 candidates have since been inducted against various advertisements since Sep. 2007. Moreover, 2,565 vacancies have been published vide Advertisement No. 01/2010 in Employment News dated 5-11 Jun 2010 (last date for submission of application is 19 July 2010). Action is in hand for induction of personnel at the earliest. To further hasten up the recruitment process and to give chance to more number of youths of the country to join BRO, two new Recruitment Centres Zone wise have been activated at Rishikesh and Tezpur catering for the Northern and Eastern Zones of the country. Also, in addition to existing GREF Centre at Pune, there are Mobile Regional Recruitment Teams (MRRTs) at various parts of the country to include Pathankot, Silchar, Jodhpur, Shillong etc which are activated

based on the requirement. The present deficiency level has appreciably dipped from 22% in 2007 to 12% as of now and this could not now be construed as an alarming state.

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x

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To reduce the deficiency of Officer in BRa, case was taken up with UPSC to recruit Officers on interview basis. Recruitment process for recruitment of 83 posts of AEE (Civ), 22 posts of AEE (E&M) and 31 posts of AO on interview basis already undertaken by UPSC. Offer of appointment to selected candidates is likely to be issued by Sectt BRDB in phased manner after completing relevant formalities”.

### **3. Outsourcing of activities of BRO**

6.22 When asked whether BRO outsource some of its activities particularly in the context of construction of roads in the border areas and the agencies to whom the activities are outsourced, the Ministry of Defence has stated as under:—

“(a) BRO till 2008 was only working departmentally except for agency and construction works in J&K State where outsourcing was permitted. In order to meet the schedule outsourcing was allowed for all works in all Projects (Nov. 2008).

BRO is executing works departmentally as well as is outsourcing the works to achieve desired targets. BRa is outsourcing following types of works:—

- (i) Design and Construction of Bridges/Flyovers.
- (ii) Consultancy for feasibility study & design of tunnels.
- (iii) Consultancy for preparation of DPR (Detailed project reports) of Roads.
- (iv) Supply of materials for departmental execution of Roads/ other works.
- (v) Construction of Roads.
- (b) The works are being outsourced through competitive tendering to the contractors/Consultants.

(c) The BRO has outsourced works in recent past years as under:-

| (Rs. in crore) |                                         |                 |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Year           | Execution Contracts                     | Supply Contract |
| 2007-08        | 299 crores                              | 250 crores      |
| 2008-09        | 653 crores                              | 269 crores      |
| 2009-10        | 830 crore+ 1458 crorel (Rohtana Tunnel) | 352 crores      |

6.23 When asked whether agencies other than BRO are also handling the task of construction and maintenance of roads in border areas, the Ministry has stated that:—

“MHA has engaged various government/semi-government agencies for construction of Border roads. But Ministry of Defence gets border roads constructed by BRO only.”

#### 4. Logistic support

6.24 When asked about the authorised and existing infrastructure available with BRO, the Ministry of Defence supplied the following information:—

| Sl.No. | Item                           | Qty Auth* | Qty Held | Reqmt No<br>(BE 2010-11) |
|--------|--------------------------------|-----------|----------|--------------------------|
| 1      | 2                              | 3         | 4        | 5                        |
| 1.     | Load Carrier                   | 441       | 849      | 710                      |
| 2.     | Tipper/Dumper                  |           | 2854     | 3627                     |
| 3.     | Farm Tractor                   |           | 65       | 72                       |
| 4.     | Dozer                          |           | 429      |                          |
| 5.     | Dozer                          |           | 359      |                          |
| 6.     | Wheel Loader-cum-Dozer         |           | 103      | 1149                     |
| 7.     | Excavator/Excavator-cum-Loader |           | 629      |                          |
| 8.     | Road Roller Static             |           | 434      |                          |

| 1   | 2                                       | 3   | 4   | 5    |
|-----|-----------------------------------------|-----|-----|------|
| 9.  | Vibrator Road Roller/<br>Soil Compactor |     | 456 | 1065 |
| 10. | Stone/Sand Crusher                      |     | 215 | 555  |
| 11. | Air Compressor                          |     | 611 | 779  |
| 12. | Snow Equipments                         | 154 | 77  | 35   |
| 13. | Generator Sets                          | 409 | 725 | 6    |
| 14. | Hot Mix Plants                          |     | 103 | 118  |
| 15. | Paver Finisher                          |     | 88  | 119  |
| 16. | Concrete Mixer/<br>Vibrator             |     | 438 | 554  |
| 17. | Welding Set                             | 204 | 188 |      |
| 18. | Motor Grader                            | 5   | 45  |      |
| 19. | Drag line                               |     | 10  | 6    |
| 20. | Crane                                   | 16* | 35  | 22   |

6.25 Detailed information about annual requirement and availability of items like snow boot and winter uniform to BRa personnel as made available to the Committee as under:—

| Sl.No. | Items          | Annual<br>requirement for<br>replacement | Available & dues<br>in* (01.04.2010) |
|--------|----------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1      | 2              | 3                                        | 4                                    |
| 1.     | Jersey Woolen  | 20771                                    | 19835                                |
| 2.     | Blanket        | 21558                                    | 15132                                |
| 3.     | Great Coat     | 1797                                     | 1740                                 |
| 4.     | Cap Balaclava  | 5425                                     | 4280                                 |
| 5.     | Coat Parka     | 4521                                     | 3753                                 |
| 6.     | Trouser Parka  | 5425                                     | 5320                                 |
| 7.     | Mattress Kapok | 4340                                     | 6372                                 |

| 1   | 2                      | 3     | 4     |
|-----|------------------------|-------|-------|
| 8.  | Sleeping Bag           | 5425  | 5816  |
| 9.  | Snow Boot              | 10849 | 10581 |
| 10. | Snow Gloves            | 18082 | 21698 |
| 11. | Snow Goggles           | 4521  | 3452  |
| 12. | Siachen Clothing       |       |       |
|     | (a) Gloves             | 202   | 247   |
|     | (b) Over Garment       | 202   | 204   |
|     | (c) Multi Purpose Boot | 202   | 226   |
|     | (d) Jacket & Trouser   | 202   | 173   |
|     | (e) Head Cap           | 202   | 210   |

#### 5. Inadequate Airlifting Facilities

6.26 During the study visit to Leh, Srinagar and some border areas, the Committee have been informed that there is inadequate Rotary Wing Air Effort. HQ DGBR has been consistently allotted air efforts lesser than its requirement the IAF does not have the requisite air lift to meet the requirement of agencies including BRO. This has adversely impacted the construction of roads in forward areas as air lift is necessary for transportation of earth moving plant and other constructional materials to work sites to enable multi point construction of roads. An empowered Committee has been set up under the aegis of Air HQ to outsource same to private agencies. However, the Committee has not made much headway so far. In the interim BRa has been accorded "in principle approval" by Ministry of Defence to lease helicopters from Pawan Hans. The case is in final stage of sanction with BRDB Secretariat additionally, for the long run keeping in mind the heady requirement rotary wing air effort, there may be a case in procuring of helicopters (to be operational and maintained by Pawan Hans) especially for BRa to meet their requirements.

6.27 When asked to comment on the above mentioned observation of the Committee, the Ministry has stated as under:—

"For the full requirement of air efforts, a high powered Committee has been constituted under the Chairmanship of DG (Ops) Air Headquarters. It is in the process of deciding rates of outsourcing.



Meanwhile considering the urgent need of BRa, Ministry has approved MoU with Pawan Hans Helicopter Ltd to meet air efforts in eastern sector by Rotary wing."

6.28 On being asked whether any air lift facility is being provided to BRa by IAF to move the machines and material at construction sites, the Ministry has stated as under:—

"Air Effort facility is being provided to BRa by IAF. Total demand of 4054.01 MT has been projected by BRa for FY 2010-11 and 929 MT RW Air Effort has been allotted to BRO. Requisition for 1250.68 MT has been placed by various 31 Projects against the total demand of 4054.01 MT till 11th Jul 2010. Against the requisition of 1250.68 MT, only 142.45 MT Air Effort has been materialized up to 11 July 2010."

6.29 When enquired whether any dedicated air service for BRO has been envisaged by the Ministry to speed up the construction process and whether help from private operators can be taken in this regard, the Ministry has stated that:—

"Presently no dedicated air service is available for BRO; however MoU with Pawan Hans Helicopters Limited (PHHL) has been approved by the Ministry."

6.30 During deposition before the Committee, Defence Secretary, while responding to the points in regard to airlifting facilities stated as under:—

"Airlift is being done for a number of purposes by the Indian Air Force. One is to carry to the troops to the forward areas; then it is to carry the rations etc. and we also do it for BRO for carrying their equipment etc. because the roads are built in certain areas where no equipment can be carried by road. They are in remote areas. Even there are no airfields. Heavy lift helicopters have to be used. Then, there is also the state lift. We also provide State lift in States like Jammu and Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh and others where it is the only Ministry of Defence e of transportation when they get tied up in snow storms and otherwise. So, there are various purposes. What is being done is that we are trying to increase the overall airlift capability of our Air Force as a part of our Ministry of Defence ernisation programme. In fact, 80 medium lift helicopters have been ordered which will be coming. But that process is going to take time.

The orders have been placed and it is expected that some helicopters will start coming from next year. But what has been done is that because there is a shortage of airlift capability and time is a compelling constraint, what we have suggested to BRO is also to look at outsourcing to private sector. With the approval of the Government, now, Air Force has also floated a tender for outsourcing and simultaneously BRO also is negotiating with Pawan Hans to be able to get the requisite airlift capability so that we can augment it."

6.31 During oral evidence of the Ministry of Defence, when asked about the capacity of Pawan Hans, to carry the loads of heavy equipment of BRO in high altitude and other difficult terrains, the Defence Secretary, stated:—

x

x

x

"They (BRO) do not have Mi-26. They have something corresponding to. Mi-17. Some air lift capability is being allocated by the Air Force itself to the BRO. But we feel that if we want to step up the pace of work, then we should have more of airlift capability and Pawan Hans says that they will be able to lift equipment of certain kinds. The one which is really very heavy which requires a hook, Air Force will supplement. They will also supplement. So, there will be some addition to BRO's capability. It may not be a full supplement as you rightly pointed out but it will be some addition."

6.32 During oral evidence, Director-General, BRO stated that:—

"Two things have already been done. One is that Air Force has already now finalized RFP for outsourcing of helicopters, and that RFP is shortly, in a day or two, will be sent to the Ministry for their perusal. Once the Finance peruses that, then it will be further progressed. Simultaneously we have also finalized a MoU with Pawan Hans which has also been approved by the Ministry now. They have said: "Instead of a MoU, you do a contract." That has been finalized now. Shortly within this month, we should be able to finalize that contract.

Initially what they have done is that they have promised that whatever effort they have they would give us. So, the idea was that at least let us get whatever additional we can get so that we do not suffer and also we can utilize some of air effort during the working period. Hopefully, they will give additional air effort

released from the East where I understand that they have given on MoU for one or two Mi-17. Once that is released, they said that they would give it to us and dedicate it to us.

They are also planning to buy certain additional helicopters which will be long term; probably next year they will be able to dedicate that air effort to us also. Our demand for air effort is minimum additional five helicopters this year. If we do not get that much, then our work will suffer. That is over and above what the Air Force is giving us."

6.33 He further clarified that:—

"Hopefully with Pawan Hans, if we get one or two additional aircraft on demand, then we will be able to do some portion of our air effort. What they (BRO) have said is that they will do 3,000 MT this year. We have entered into an MoU. The Air Force is doing separately for the private sector. That is now being sent to the Ministry. They are doing it separately for the civil sector. We did it with the public sector only so that it can be done fast. That will take its own time. The process time would be one to three months. We wanted this immediately so that we do not lose our working hrs. and working period. This is our working period till October now."

## **6. Non Availability of land**

6.34 The Ministry has informed that delay in land acquisition is one of the factors responsible for delay in completing the BRO projects. When asked to furnish detailed information about the problems being faced by BRO in acquisition of land for construction of roads in border areas from the State Governments/UT Administrations and the efforts being made to obviate the problems, the Ministry has stated as under:—

"The delay in acquisition of land is primarily because of the lengthy legal procedures involved. Moreover, the land records in some states are not readily available. There are also frequent changes in the cost of the land being asked by the revenue forest authorities. Frequent review meetings with the State Revenue/forest authorities, MoEF etc are organized. Further issues are pursued through writing letters, communication on phone and field visits."

6.35 When enquired about the rehabilitation and resettlement in case of acquisition of land for the construction of border roads by BRO, the Ministry stated as under:—

“The rehabilitation in case of acquisition of land for construction of border roads by BRO is the responsibility of the concerned State/Union Territory. The BRO pay for amount of compensation as intimated by the Revenue authorities for any such measure.”

6.36 With regard to the number of cases pending for rehabilitation in this regard, the Ministry has stated as under:—

“No case of rehabilitation is pending with BRO. Amount for rehabilitation, as demanded by State Government, are deposited regularly by BRO.”

6.37 With regard to the number of cases where the affected party has approached courts in the context of acquisition of land for BRa roads and providing rehabilitation thereof, the Ministry has submitted the following information:—

“There are 432 numbers of cases pending in various courts. Project wise details are as under:

| Project  | Nos of cases |
|----------|--------------|
| Beacon   | 69           |
| Chetak   | 24           |
| Dantak   | 4            |
| Hirak    | 1            |
| Deepak   | 13           |
| Pushpak  | 34           |
| Sampark  | 62           |
| Setuk    | 188          |
| Sewak    | 16           |
| Swastik  | 2            |
| Udayak   | 2            |
| Vartak   | 1            |
| Shivalik | 12           |
| Arunank  | 3            |
| LC/DGBR  | 1            |
| Total    | 432          |

6.38 While responding to the query regarding 432 number of pending cases, the representative of Ministry of Defence has stated:—

“We have been monitoring it very regularly. In different State particularly those of the Eastern States, because of lack of land records, there was a problem. In many cases, we have paid the compensation for land which we have acquired but there are some partners, family members, joint family members have come and raised an issue that they have not got it though they have got their share in it. Many cases have come up like these. Secondly, even if we install our process in some land holdings, despite payment of hiring charges, there have been cases against BRO. So, we have been discussing and tackling them with the local authorities. We have been able to solve many cases. But some court cases are going on and we have filed our counter affidavits and replies. It is hoped that they will be resolved in the near future.”

6.39 With regard to the process of acquisition and compensation paid, the representative of the Ministry of Defence, submitted:—

“When we require some land, we go to the State Government and the concerned district authorities for the purpose. There is a District Land Officer under the District Collector. He notifies the area and the concerned numbers of the land and so on and the amount is told to us that we have to pay. Then we immediately pay the entire amount to the concerned district authorities.

As regards Setuk, we have already paid the amount but in 172 cases, they have filed cases for enhancement of compensation. That means they are not satisfied with the compensation paid to them. But we have paid them as per the requirement of the district authorities. So, we are correct in one sense that we have paid whatever has been demanded by them. But now they are saying that the amount should be higher.”

## PART II

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### *Overall scenario of construction of roads and border areas*

1. The Committee note that India has 14,880 Kms. long land borders running through 92 districts in 17 States and share with seven neighbouring Countries viz. Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, China, Bhutan and Nepal. Whereas the Western borders of the country along the State of J&K (plains), Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat are reasonably well connected and fairly accessible, the Northern and Eastern Borders are not as well connected as informed by the Ministry of Defence. In view of the aforesaid status of border roads, the Army posts along the Northern and Eastern borders are also not so well connected. Although a lot of efforts are being made by the Union Government and State Governments to provide connectivity to our borders, the unique strategic location of India poses unique security challenges. More so, the problems specific to different portions of our extensive borders have become aggravated in recent times due to cross border terrorism as acknowledged by the Group of Ministers 37 in its report. Besides the infrastructure being created on the border by our neighbouring countries particularly China further poses challenges before the country.

The Government has created the Border Roads Organization in the year 1960 with the aim of speedy development of road network and infrastructure along the borders and the roads constructed by the Ministry of Defence are mainly handled by BRO. The Committee during the recent study visit to Leh, Sri nagar and border areas have observed that construction and maintenance of border roads/tunnels/infrastructure are affected due to various factors which include lack of adequate funds, capability constraints, inadequate airlifting facility, pending forest/wildlife clearance, overall increase in the quantum of work being entrusted to Border Road Organisation (BRO). The Committee may like to emphasize that roads are an essential part of the border management. Besides the good connectivity to our borders by roads is pre-requisite for the socio-economic development of the nation. Not only that, roads in the border areas are necessary for the Armed Forces to meet their strategic needs. In wartime, it is essential to develop and maintain roads to keep the line of communication open in original and

redeployed sectors for the 38 Armed Forces. Various aspects related to construction of border roads have been examined in detail by the Committee and observations/recommendations covering various issues have been given in the succeeding part of the report. Here, the Committee may like to strongly recommend the Government to take all the desired initiatives to address to the various problems coming in the way of construction of border roads. Not only that, there is an urgent need to have fast track procedures for the construction of roads and other infrastructure on our borders, keeping in view the strategic needs as well as the challenges the country faces.

*Construction of roads on borders by the neighbouring countries*

2. The Committee find that whereas it is an acknowledged fact that roads and other infrastructure is being created on the borders by different countries particularly China, the Ministry has not maintained any details and data with regard to such activities going on the borders which is evident from the response of the Ministry. This speaks volume of the casual attitude of the Ministry towards such an important matter concerning the security of the nation. The Committee feel that it is utmost necessary to keep a watch on the construction activities going on our borders by different countries and maintain the data in this regard. Besides there is an urgent need to ensure that our plans are in consonance with the impending security challenges. As such the Committee strongly recommend to formulate some sort of mechanism in this regard. The Committee should be kept informed about the action taken in this regard.

*Long Term Perspective Plans for construction of border roads*

3. The Government has chalked out Long Term Perspective Plans viz. LTPP1 and LTPP2 for augmentation of infrastructure on India's borders. Under LTPP1, 277 roads of the length of 13100 Kms. amounting to Rs. 24886 crore are to be constructed by 2012. Similarly, under LTPP2, 281 roads of 14857 Kms. of the cost of Rs. 25268 crore are to be constructed by the year 2022. The data with regard to progress of the works under LTPP1, as furnished by the Ministry indicates that out of total of 277 number of roads, only 29 roads could be completed and the work in respect of another 168 roads is in progress. No work has yet started in respect of 80 roads measuring 2624 Kms.

The Committee find that even when the Secretary, Ministry of Defence during the course of oral evidence has admitted that they

may not be able to meet the deadline of 2012 in respect of LTPP1, there seems to be a sense of complacency on the part of BRO. When the issue of tardy progress of road works was raised during evidence, instead of informing the Committee about the concrete action being taken by BRO, the representative of BRO stated that the time taken by them is one of the least taken by any other agency like PWD.

The Committee would like to emphasise that BRO is the prestigious organization of the country, which need to set international standards. The Committee therefore, strongly recommend that all the initiatives should be taken to address the various problems being faced with regard to construction of roads and it should be ensured that the roads under LTPP1 and LTPP2 are constructed within the stipulated time frame.

#### *Capacity building of BRO*

4. The Committee note that all the road construction works of Ministry of Defence on the borders are executed by BRO. Besides, Ministry of Defence, BRO also works for five other Union Ministries. Not only that the work assigned by Planning Commission State/UT Governments, National Highway Authority of India, Public Sector Undertakings, autonomous bodies are also handled by BRO. It has come out during the deliberations that this has led to a situation where the planned quantum of GS works is beyond the capability of BRO.

From the detailed information furnished by the Ministry, the Committee understand that the works being assigned to BRO by various Ministries/agencies other than Ministry of Defence are basically intended to develop the induction routes to the Borders as also to keep them traffic worthy at all times for the movement of the Army. While appreciating the fact that the aforesaid works are complimentary to the requirement of the Armed Forces, the Committee feel that efforts should be made to assign the normal works to the various Central and State Government agencies like PWD, so that BRO is primarily involved in the strategic infrastructure activity as per their mandate. The Committee feel that this would address the problem of over work of BRO and the various strategic works would be completed in time. The Committee would like to recommend that the necessary guidelines in this regard should be issued to various Ministries/State Governments and other public sector agencies and the Committee informed accordingly.



*Expertise in tunnel construction by BRO*

5. The Committee find that tunnel construction is part of the road works. BRO is the premier organization involved with the creation of infrastructure on our borders, even then it has no expertise in tunnel construction. The Committee during the course of examination have been informed that reputed consultants are being inducted to execute the work for execution of Rohtang tunnel. The Committee are unhappy to note the aforesaid position. It is surprising to note that even after celebrating the Golden Jubilee of BRO in the year, 2010, adequate emphasis has not been given on tunnel training. To address the problem, only 6-7 officers are now being trained in the task of tunnel construction. The Committee strongly recommend that all out efforts should be made to train more and more officers in the construction of tunnels. While involving the international reputed consultants for tunnel works, it should be ensured that our own officers are also associated with the task so that they may also get proper on-the- job training. The Committee would also like to emphasize that it should be ensured that all the tunnel works including Rohtang Pass are completed within the stipulated time frame.

*Maintenance of Border Roads*

6. The Committee note that for regular maintenance of border roads, BRO gets yearly maintenance grant and has special specifications not only for high altitudes but also for places where there are slides and areas where the roads could get damaged due to snow. However, the Committee during the study visit to Leh, Srinagar and some border areas, during the month of June, 2010 have observed that road condition at high altitude areas was so bad that it took seven hours to reach from Leh to Pengong Lake.

During the course of deliberations, the Committee have been informed by the representative of the Ministry of Defence that over a period of time because of lack of funding, they always made less specifications to cover greater length of roads. The Committee strongly feel that besides constructing wide network of roads alongwith the borders, it is imperative to maintain the existing one. Reducing the specifications of roads due to lack of fund is not a healthy sign.

The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that funds should not be a constraint for maintenance of roads. Adequate outlay as such should be provided for the maintenance of border roads. The

Committee would like to be apprised of the data with regard to the expenditure involved in the maintenance of border roads during each year of Tenth Plan and Eleventh plan so as to understand the requirement of outlay in this regard.

*The budget as well as staff constraints*

7. The Committee observe from the information furnished by the Ministry that funds are not a constraint so far as the issue of construction of border roads is concerned. The outlay during Eleventh plan is steadily increasing and the expenditure position is also satisfactory except for the year 2009-10 when Rs. 779 crore had to be surrendered due to late approval of budget, the year being the election year. While taking note of the fact that finances are not a constraint so far as the matter of construction of border roads is concerned, the Committee find that a lot needs to be done to increase the capacity of BRO, that is the main organization involved in the construction of roads. From the data made available by Ministry of Defence, the Committee find that the restructuring of BRO was sanctioned in September, 2006. Out of 151 sanctioned units BRO has raised only 127 units as part of capability building measures. The Committee further observe that there is a huge gap between the sanctioned and the existing strength of officers and subordinates in BRO. Out of the authorised strength of 1899 officers, the present strength is only 1204, the deficiency being 36.6 percent. Similarly in case of subordinates the existing strength is 35579 against the authorised strength of 40747, the deficiency being 12.7 percent. With the raising of the remaining 24 units, the situation in this regard may further worsen. The Committee express serious concern over such a state of affairs and strongly recommend that all initiatives should be taken to raise the remaining 24 sanctioned units and to recruit the officers and staff without any further delay so as to enable BRO to meet the overall increase in the quantum of work.

*Induction of Information Technology in Border Areas*

8. As per the information furnished by the Ministry of Defence, BRO Wide Area Network (BRD-WAN) is planning for connecting all BRO units for the purpose of sharing of data, voice and video. The Committee find that it is utmost necessary to provide communication links in border areas. Not only that proper communication is urgently required in war like situation. As such the Committee would like to emphasize that all efforts should be made so that the aforesaid project is executed expeditiously.

*Outsourcing of activities of BRO*

9. BRO permitted outsourcing for all works in all projects from November, 2008. Besides, outsourcing consultancy and supply of materials, BRO is also outsourcing works related to design and construction of Bridges/Flyovers and construction of roads. From the data made available by Ministry of Defence, the Committee note that execution contracts and supply contracts are increasing over the years. While taking note of the decision of the Ministry to outsource some of the execution and supply works of BRO, the Committee feel that it should actually result in increase in overall road and infrastructure construction activities of BRO. During the year 2008-09, the expenditure met was Rs. 436.02 crore, more than the pervious year whereas the execution contracts for Rs. 653 crore and supply contracts for Rs. 269 crore were sanctioned during the aforesaid year. Similarly, during the year 2009-10, there was an increase of Rs. 605.88 crore in the expenditure met by BRO whereas execution contract of Rs. 830 crore plus Rs. 1458 crore for Rohtang tunnel and supply contract for Rs. 352 crore were sanctioned. If the amount involved in works outsourced is deducted from the overall expenditure, the data indicates the decline in expenditure of BRO which is not a healthy sign. The Committee would like the Ministry to furnish the specific reasons in this regard. They would also like to emphasize that all actions should be taken to increase the capacity of BRO so that the border roads are constructed within the stipulated time frame of different plans.

*Strengthening of infrastructure available with BRO*

10. The data furnished by Ministry of Defence with regard to the authorized and existing infrastructure available with BRO indicates that there are gaps between quantity authorized and quantity held. Whereas, the Ministry of Defence has claimed that latest snow cutting equipments are available with BRO, the data indicates that out of 154 number of authorized snow cutting equipments, the quantity held is 77 *i.e.* around 50 per cent. Similarly, for welding sets, there is shortage of 16 items and under dragline, there is shortage of 4 numbers. Border roads are constructed on difficult terrains and under the harsh climatic conditions and adequate number of snow equipments and other machinesl infrastructure are urgently required to enable BRO to accomplish the given tasks. The gap between the quantity authorized and quantity held in respect of the important items is a matter of serious concern. The Committee strongly recommend that the equipments

should be purchased as per the authorized quantity without any further delay. 48 Besides urgent action should be taken to procure the latest equipments available worldwide to address to the challenges of constructing roads and infrastructure on difficult terrains.

*Providing proper uniform and other livery items to BRO officers and workers*

11. BRO staff work in harsh climatic conditions and as such it is utmost necessary that they are provided with proper uniform, shoes and other required livery items. From the information furnished by the Ministry, the Committee note that there are huge gaps between annual requirements for replacement and available items. The Committee strongly recommend that the uniform, shoes and other livery items provided to BRO personnel should be of high quality and all efforts should be made to have the adequate number of each of the items so as to enable the officers/staff to work in such harsh conditions.

*Inadequate Airlift*

12. During the study visit to Leh, Sri nagar and some border areas, the Committee had found that HQ DGBR has been consistently allotted air efforts lesser than its requirement as Indian Air Force does not have the requisite air lifts to meet the equipment of agencies including BRO. The data furnished by the Ministry with regard to demand and availability of airlift facility further substantiates the aforesaid observation of the Committee. Against the total demand of 4054.01 MT projected by BRa for the year 2010-11, requisition for 1250.68 MT has been placed by various projects and only 142.45 MT air efforts has only materialised up to 11 July, 2010. From the aforesaid data, the Committee find that inadequate airlift is one of the major areas hampering the task of construction of border roads. To address the aforesaid issue, various short term and long term measures are being taken/proposed to be taken by the Ministry. 80 medium lift helicopters have been ordered which would be coming but the process would take time as acknowledged by the Secretary, Ministry of Defence during the course of oral evidence. Various options like outsourcing and involvement of private sector are being explored. As an interim measure BRa is negotiating with Pawan Hans for helicopters. However, these helicopters would be able to lift equipment of certain kinds. The equipment which is really very heavy requires a hook for which Air force would be supplementing. Thus Pawan Hans would

complement the air lift facility provided by Air Force and there would be some addition to the capacity.

While taking note of the fact that various proposals of the Ministry to increase the airlift capacity are in the pipeline, the Committee would like to emphasize that early decision on all the projects should be taken so that the airlift capacity is enhanced without any further delay. Besides the Committee would also like to emphasize that there is an urgent need to do the long-term planning in this regard. The demand of airlift in the coming years should be properly assessed and the requisite measures taken to fill the gap between the required and the existing airlift capacity through various proposed initiatives like outsourcing, involvement of private sector etc. The concrete initiatives should be taken without any further delay and the Committee informed accordingly.

*Availability of land for construction of border roads*

13. The Committee note that availability of land is the pre-requisite for construction of border roads. The delay in land acquisition is one of the factors responsible for delay in completing the BRO projects as admitted by Ministry of Defence. Various reasons for delay in acquisition of land that have been stated are lengthy legal procedures, non-availability of land records, frequent changes in the cost of land etc. it has also been stated that the maximum time is taken for the proposal to reach the nodal officer level and most of the time is wasted in getting staff together for joint survey. While noting that lengthy legal procedures and non-availability of land records are the real hurdles in acquisition of land, the Committee feel that some of the impediments being faced in the land acquisition can be addressed with the proper coordinating mechanism between the State Governments, district administration and local authorities. Better coordination would definitely address the problem of the time wasted in getting staff together in joint survey. The Ministry has stated that there is a need to sensitize State Governments in this regard. The Committee feel that not only State Governments, but the district authorities, local bodies and the public also need to be sensitized that the land is required for the construction of border roads which are required for the security of the country. The Committee also note that public is an important stakeholder on the matter of construction of roads. Besides serving the strategic purpose, border roads also result in economic and social upliftment of the masses residing in those areas. As such frequent interaction by the Army with the masses would

certainly help the authorities in getting the land for construction of border roads. The Committee would like to emphasize that all the desired actions on the suggested lines should be taken and the Committee informed accordingly.

*Streamlining the procedure with regard to forest and wildlife clearances*

14. The Committee note that border roads do not need environment clearance under the Environment Protection Act. However, forest and wildlife clearances are required under the Forest Conservation Rule and Wildlife Protection Act respectively. As per the Forest Conservation Rules, 2003, the timelines for clearance of proposals at State Government and Central Government level have been prescribed. The period of 90 days for processing at the State Government level and period of 60 days at the Central Government level has further been compressed to 30 days at each of the level for border roads along the Indo-China border and projects of national security importance. In spite of the clear cut time frame provided under the rules, the forest and wildlife clearances have been the biggest stumbling block for construction of roads and other infrastructure development in border areas as observed by the Committee during the Study visit. The Committee have been informed that the average time taken is 2-3 years and in certain cases, 8-9 years have been taken for such clearances. The detailed data furnished by the Ministry with regard to forest clearance further substantiates the aforesaid observation of the Committee. Out of 109 Indo China Border Roads (ICBR) cases, in respect of 11 cases forest clearances are not required. As such out of 98 remaining cases final approval accorded and approval in principle accorded is for 79 cases. As such approval of 19 cases is still pending at various stages. Similarly, in cases of non-ICBR cases, 138 cases still require forest clearances.

The Committee note that the aforesaid issue is being considered by the Ministries of Defence and Environment and Forests and various steps have been taken to streamline the forest and wildlife clearances which include simplifying and design integrated form for application for forest and wildlife clearances, single window system at three levels viz. Ministry of Environment and Forests level, State Forest Department Head Quarters and at DFO level in districts, processing of applications involving forest clearance and wildlife simultaneously. The Committee note that all these initiatives are steps in the right direction. However, the real issue is enforcement of various decisions taken by the Government. In this

connection, various suggestions were made in the meeting held by the Cabinet Secretary, the details of which were given by the Defence Secretary during the course of oral evidence. A proposal was made to have a nodal officer at the State level in the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of environment and forests. It was also suggested that a checklist should be given to the nodal officers clearly delineating the responsibility of giving timelines. The Committee find that the aforesaid proposals merit consideration and the earlier decision in this regard should be taken and the Committee informed. The Committee would also like the Ministry to follow the impact of the recent decisions taken by the Government on the forest and wildlife clearances and keep the Committee informed. The Committee also desire that to strictly maintain the compressed timelines for forest clearance besides taking all the proposed initiatives, it is utmost necessary that the accountability at each level is fixed, only then the stipulated time frame for the purpose of forest clearance would be maintained. Concrete initiatives on the suggested lines should be taken and the Committee apprised about the follow up actions in this regard.

15. The Committee note that on the issue of forest clearance, certain timelines have been prescribed under the forest rules which are further compressed for construction of roads and infrastructure for border roads along the Indo-China border and national security importance. However, in case of wildlife clearance, no timelines have been prescribed. There is an empowered Committee constituted by the Supreme Court which also addresses some questions on wildlife. By the Army, an application has been filed before the Hon'ble Supreme Court that for roads falling within 50 Kms. of the border, wildlife clearance should be dispensed with and the application is under consideration of the Court at the moment. The Committee strongly recommend that the issue should be followed with the Court. If the Supreme Court agrees to the aforesaid request of Army, it would certainly help in expediting wildlife clearances. The Committee further note that although certain initiatives are being taken by the Government to streamline wildlife clearances which include processing wildlife forest clearance simultaneously and preparing integrated form for both the clearances, the Secretary Environment and Forests on record stated that this is an endeavour however both the processes are different. The Committee, strongly recommend that there is an urgent need to process forest and wildlife clearance simultaneously so as to cut short the time taken individually for each of the processes. In this connection, appointment of the common nodal officers for both forest and



wildlife clearance as proposed by the Cabinet Secretary merits consideration. The final decision in this regard should be taken expeditiously and the Committee informed accordingly.

16. The Committee find from the information made available to the Committee that various projects relating to the infrastructure at borders in the country are being implemented by various Union Ministries/ Undertakings and State Governments. Ministry of Defence conducts regular review meetings with the representatives of State Governments. Besides Cabinet Secretariat/PMO also organise coordination meetings with the officials of the Ministry of Defence, Border Roads Organisation and State Governments. The Committee strongly feel that there is an urgent need to have some sort of structured coordinating mechanism represented by the various Ministries, State Governments, Public Sector Undertakings involved in border roads and BRO so as to have a holistic view of the infrastructure being created on our borders. Such a mechanism would also help in resolving the various conflicting issues. The Committee urge that such mechanism should be set up expeditiously and the Committee informed accordingly.

#### *Rehabilitation & Resettlement*

17. The Committee observe that rehabilitation in case of acquisition of land for construction of border roads is the responsibility of the concerned State/Union Territory. BRO pay amount of compensation as intimated by the revenue authorities for any such measures. BRO deposit the amount for rehabilitation as demanded by the State Governments. The Committee further observe that there are 432 number of cases pending in various courts because of various reasons such as lack of land records, joint family system and demand for higher compensation etc. The Committee feel that besides taking various initiatives to facilitate the land acquisition process it is utmost necessary that the person who has sacrificed his ancestral land, gets displaced and loses his livelihood is adequately compensated. The Committee desire that BRO should take all the initiatives in this regard. It should be monitored by BRO, that the amount paid by them to the State Government for compensation actually reaches the affected people on time by asking the State Governments to submit utilization certificates and holding regular meetings with the State Government officials and the affected parties. The Committee also desire BRO to go for out of court settlement and pay the market price for the land to optimize the satisfaction level of the affected people. The initiatives as



suggested should be taken expeditiously and the Committee be kept informed.

18. To conclude the Committee note that the routine procedures rules and guidelines can never be the guiding principles when it is the question of security and safety of the nation. Since border roads are needed for the strategic reasons, it is of utmost importance to amend the laws, rules and guidelines to evolve the fast track procedures for land acquisition and also for getting forest wildlife clearances. Besides there is an urgent need to address other issues *viz.* capacity constraints of construction agency *i.e.* BRC, inadequate airlift etc. The urgent actions as suggested in the various recommendations/observations made in the report should be taken so as to provide very good connectivity to our borders.

NEW DELHI;  
17 August, 2010  
26 Shravana, 1932 (Saka)

SATPAL MAHARAJ,  
Chairman,  
Standing Committee on Defence.

MINUTES OF THE TWENTIETH SITTING OF THE STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE (2009-10)

The Committee sat on Thursday, the 21st July, 2010 from 1500 to 1700 hrs. in Committee Room No. 'B', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Satpal Maharaj—*Chairman*

MEMBERS

*Lok Sabha*

2. Shri Harish Choudhary
3. Shri Kamal Kishor—'Commando'
4. Shri H.D. Devegowda
5. Dr. Sucharu Ranjan Halder
6. Shri Kapil Muni Karwaria
7. Shri C.R. Patil
8. Shri A.T. Nana Patil
9. Shri Bhaskarrao Bapurao Patil
10. Shri Amarnath Pradhan
11. Shri C. Rajendran
12. Shri M. Raja Mohan Reddy
13. Shri Bajju Ban Riyan
14. Shri Mahabali Singh
15. Rajkumari Ratna Singh

*Rajya Sabha*

16. Shri Mukut Mithi
17. Shri K.B. Shanappa
18. Shri M.V. Mysura Reddy

SECRETARIAT

- |                               |   |                         |
|-------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Shri T.K. Mukherjee        | — | <i>Joint Secretary</i>  |
| 2. Shrimati Sudesh Luthra     | — | <i>Director</i>         |
| 3. Shrimati Jyochnamayi Sinha | — | <i>Deputy Secretary</i> |

## LIST OF REPRESENTATIVES MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

|                         |   |                        |
|-------------------------|---|------------------------|
| 1. Shri Pradeep Kumar   | — | Defence Secretary      |
| 2. Shri Shekhar Agarwal | — | Addl. Secretary        |
| 3. Smt. Nita Kapoor     | — | Secretary Def. (Fin.)  |
| 4. Dr. Subhash Sharma   | — | Secretary (BRDB)       |
| 5. Lt. Gen M.C. Badhani | — | DGBR                   |
| 6. Dr. V.K. Yadav       | — | Addl DGBR              |
| 7. Brig J.K. Narang     | — | DOG (TP), BRO          |
| 8. Brig Sukhvir Sharma  | — | DDG (Pers), BRO        |
| 9. Shri P.K. Kataria    | — | Addl Financial Advisor |
| 10. Dr. Alind Rastogi   | — | Director, BRDB         |

## MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT &amp; FORESTS

|                            |   |                 |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------|
| 1. Shri Vijai Sharma       | — | Secretary (E&F) |
| 2. Dr. P.B. Gangopadhyay   | — | ADG(FC)         |
| 3. Sh. Ansar Ahmed         | — | IGF (FC)        |
| 4. Dr. (Mrs.) Nalini Bhatt | — | Advisor         |
| 5. Prof. S.P. Gautam       | — | Chairman (CPCB) |
| 6. Dr. S. Annadurai        | — | Consultant (IT) |

2. At the outset, the Chairman welcomed the representatives of the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Environment and Forests to the sitting of the Committee and drew their attention to Direction 58 of Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha regarding maintaining confidentiality of the deliberations of the sitting.

3. Thereafter, the representatives of the Ministry of Defence through a power point presentation briefed the Committee on the subject 'Construction of Roads in border areas of the country'. The representatives of Ministry of Environment and Forests also briefed the Committee about the various issues related to construction of border roads involving wildlife and forest clearances cases.

4. The representatives of the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Environment and Forests responded to the queries raised by the members during the deliberations. As regards the points on which the representatives could not readily respond, the Committee desired the Ministries to furnish written information at the earliest.

5. A verbatim record of the proceedings was kept.

*The Committee then adjourned.*

MINUTES OF THE TWENTY FIRST SITTING OF THE STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE (2009-10)

The Committee sat on Tuesday, the 17th August, 2010 from 1600 to 1645 hrs. in 'Main' Committee Room, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Satpal Maharaj—*Chairman*

MEMBERS

*Lok Sabha*

2. Shri Harish Choudhary
3. Shri Kamal Kishor 'Commando'
4. Dr. Sucharu Ranjan Halder
5. Shri Ramesh Jigajinagi
6. Shri Kapil Muni Karwaria
7. Shri C.R. Patil
8. Dr. Prasanna Kumar Patasani
9. Shri A.T. Nana Patil
10. Shri Bhaskarrao Bapurao Patil
11. Shri Amarnath Pradhan
12. Shri C. Rajendran
13. Shri M. Raja Mohan Reddy
14. Shri Bajju Ban Riyan
15. Rajkumari Ratna Singh

*Rajya Sabha*

16. Prof. P.J. Kurien
17. Shri Mukut Mithi
18. Shri K.B. Shanappa
19. Shri Munquad Ali

SECRETARIAT

- |                               |   |                         |
|-------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Shri T. K. Mukherjee       | — | <i>Joint Secretary</i>  |
| 2. Shrimati Sudesh Luthra     | — | <i>Director</i>         |
| 3. Shrimati Jyochnamayi Sinha | — | <i>Deputy Secretary</i> |

2. At the outset, the Chairman welcomed the members to the sitting of the Committee. The Committee then took up for consideration the draft Report on the subject 'Construction of Roads in the Border Areas of the Country' and adopted the same without any modification in the report.

3. The Committee, then, authorised the Chairman to present the same to the House on a date convenient to him.

4. After detailed deliberations, the Committee decided to undertake a local study visit to some defence laboratories in Delhi to have an on the spot study of various ongoing projects & their overall performance in connection with examination of the subject 'Performance of Defence Research Laboratories'.

*The Committee then adjourned.*