

Goyal: Won't sanction rly project through Kodagu

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Madikeri: A delegation comprising of the office bearers of Kodagu Ekikarana Ranga and Wildlife First met railway minister Piyush Goyal in New Delhi on Monday and submitted a memorandum opposing the proposed railway line that passes through Kodagu district and connects Mysuru with Thalassery.

Goyal categorically promised that the Railways will not implement the project. The minister said he had gathered information about the effect on environment, ecology and wildlife if the proposed railway project enroute Kodagu is implemented. The union government will not consider or sanction such projects at all, he assured. He added that this project was proposed during 1960s and since then the centre had not given its nod to it in order to protect water sources



GREEN CONCERNS

and wildlife.

The government has already experienced the serious effects of railway lines passing through forests in north eastern states and does not want similar issues to crop up in other wildlife zones, Goyal said.

The delegation told the minister that the Western Ghats has many unique habitats which are home to a variety of endemic and endangered species of flora and fauna. The Ghats act as a key barrier intercepting the rain-laden monsoon winds that sweep in from the southwest during la-

te summer. The effect of the Western Ghats on the monsoon therefore is immense with regards to the patterns of drainage, agriculture and water-security of a huge section of India's population living in the peninsular states to the west and east of the main mountain range, they said.

The proposed Thalassery - Mysore Railway Line will severely fragment the most important wildlife habitat in the country that harbours the highest meta-population of highly endangered tigers and elephants in the Kodagu - Nagarahole - Bandipur landscape in Karnataka which are also crucial watersheds, they said.

The delegation was led by the Wildlife First chief K M Chinnappa and included Kodagu Ekikarana Ranga member A A Thammu Poovaiyah, wildlife first members Praveen Bhargav and HN Prasad.