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Four-lane affected meet Thakur, protest land acquisition relief rate

Updated At: Mar 15, 2021 07:04 AM (IST) 1648 0 0 0



As many as 3,781 residents in Nurpur, affected by the project, have rejected the compensation awards.

Our Correspondent

Nurpur, March 14

The Pathankot-Mandi four-lane project-affected residents led by the Four-Lane Sangarsh Samiti, Nurpur, met Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur at Rehan yesterday during his visit to the neighbouring Fatehpur sub-division. They lodged a protest against compensation awards announced by the Competent Authority Land Acquisition (CALA) on March 1.

Seeking intervention of the Chief Minister, the protesters threatened to resort to direct action if fair compensation was not given to them for acquiring their land for the construction of the Pathankot-Mandi four-lane project.

Want reduction in width of stretch

To minimise displacement of people, destruction of ecology and save NHAI's funds meant for disbursement for land acquisition, the width of the four-lane stretch in package-1 from Pathankot to Bherkhud should be reduced to 32-35 m from the proposed 45 m. — Darbari Singh, president, four-lane sangarsh samiti

The project-affected 3,781 residents in Nurpur have rejected the compensation awards and have been running from pillar to post seeking fair compensation.

Minister for Forest and Youth Affairs Rakesh Pathania has recently expressed his solidarity with the affected people and threatened to resign from the Cabinet if fair compensation was not given to them.

Meanwhile, Darbari Singh, president, Four-Lane Sangarsh Samiti, claimed that neither the four-lane affected people nor the samiti were opposing this project, but only demanding fair compensation of their land so that displaced families could be rehabilitated.

"In order to minimise displacement of people, destruction of ecology and saving of NHAI's funds meant for disbursement for land acquisition, the width of the four-lane stretch in package-1 from Pathankot to Bherkhud should be reduced to 32-35 m from the proposed 45 m," he said.

The proposed NHAI's four-lane project will reduce the distance from Pathankot to Mandi from 219 km to 171 km, ease frequent traffic jams and boost tourism in the state. The Centre has released Rs 300 crore for the cost of land to be acquired for the widening of the highway. NHAI sources revealed that if people and state government didn't cooperate and the stiff opposition continued, this project could be shelved.

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