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THE GAUHATI HIGH COURT
(HIGH COURT OF ASSAM, NAGALAND, MIZORAM AND ARUNACHAL PRADESH)

Case No. : PIL/70/2026

KANGJIANGBUING RIAME AND ANR
S/O SAMWANGTEUNG RIAME, R/O LAISONG, MAHUR, NORTH CACHAR HILLS, ASSAM 788830

2: MANGLIEN HAOLAI
S/O HENKHO HAOLAI
R/O HAFLONG DIMA HASAO
SONGPIJANG PT I
HAFLONG
NORTH CACHAR
HILLS
ASSAM 78881

VERSUS

THE UNION OF INDIA AND ORS
REPRESENTED BY THE SECY. MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT BHAWAN, 1 PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI 11001

2:THE NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CORP LTD NHIDCL
REPRESENTED BY ITS MANAGING DIRECTOR
3RD FLOOR
PTI BUILDING
4 PARLIAMENT STREET
NEW DELHI 11001

3:THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
REGIONAL OFFICE
NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD NHIDCL
GUWAHATI
ASSAM.

4:THE GENERAL MANAGER P
PROJECT MONITORING UNIT PMU
NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION LTD NHIDCL
SILCHAR
ASSAM.

5:THE STATE OF ASSAM
REPRESENTED BY THE CHIEF SECY. TO THE GOVT. OF ASSAM
DISPUR
GUWAHATI 781006

6:THE DIST COMMISSIONER
DIMA HASAO
HAFLONG
ASSAM

7:THE SECRETARY
REVENUE DEPTT.
GOVT. OF ASSAM
DISPUR
GUWAHATI 781006

8:THE NORTH CACHAR HILLS AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL NCHAC
REPRESENTED BY ITS PRINCIPAL SECY. COMPETENT AUTHORITY
HAFLONG
DIMA HASAO
ASSAM

For the petitioners : Mr. U.S. Bora, Advocate

For the respondents : Mr. R.K. Talukdar, S.C., NHIDCL,
For respondent Nos.2 to 4

Mr. D. Saikia, A.G., Assam
Mr. R.M. Das and
Ms. P. Barua, S.C., Dima Hasao
Autonomous Council
For respondent Nos.5 to 8

– B E F O R E –

HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE MR. ASHUTOSH KUMAR

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE KAUSHIK GOSWAMI

04-11-2026

(Ashutosh Kumar, C.J.)

We have heard Mr. U.S. Bora, learned Advocate for the petitioners; Mr. R.K. Talukdar, learned Standing Counsel, NHIDCL for the respondent Nos.2 to 4 and Mr. D. Saikia, learned Advocate General, Assam for the respondent Nos.5 to 8.

2. This PIL has been filed by the residents of Dima Hasao, who are of the view that the alignment chosen by the National Highway Project for connecting Pailapool in Cachar district with P. Songkai in Dima Hasao, is definitely not a better option even though the construction aims at improving the regional connectivity between NH-37 and NH-137 thereby providing better access to remote/hilly areas.

3. The contention of the petitioners is that the Alignment Approval Committee, which met in the year 2025, considered four alternative alignments but approved option-3 out of the four options, which would make the stretch around 58.439 km. Such proposal of the Alignment Approval Committee was also formalised by an order.

4. The reasons for selection of such option regarding alignment is that it would be geometrically more compatible and would have lesser impact on residential and commercial properties. This option would also do away with consumption of more forest land. There will be lesser need

of land acquisition.

5. However, according to the averments made in the petition, option-3 utilises about 41.046 km of the existing road but it would consume approximately 24.06 km of greenfield. The further averment made in the petition is that according to the government sources, option-3 would require acquisition of about 207.08 hectares of land which would involve an expenditure of approximately Rs.1,550 crores.

6. The petitioners by this petition offer a solution without opposing the construction of the Highway that the existing road alignment through the Laisong-Raja Bazar, which actually today serves the inhabited villages, should be chosen as an alternative option. *A fortiori,* the reason assigned by the petitioners is that in case of opition-3, there shall be deviation from the existing inhabited corridor towards sparsely populated areas and more difficult hilly terrain, which will lessen the practical benefits of the Highway to the existing inhabitants while increasing land acquisition, environmental damages and impacting water sources, wild life, etc.

7. Thus, what the petitioners demand is only a fresh, fair and transparent re-examination of option-3 for the proposed construction of the Highway.

8. To that extent, the petitioners are ready to file a fresh representation before the NHIDCL authorities.

9. Should such a representation be filed within a period of one week before the competent authority, the same shall be evaluated and

a speaking order shall be passed within a period of fifteen days thereafter.

10. We, however, make it clear that this Court does not have any expertise in the matter where it pertains to structural design of the Highway. In case, it is found that the option-3 exercised by the authorities is the best choice, the same shall be made known to the representationists.

With the afore-noted direction and observation, this PIL is disposed off.

JUDGE **CHIEF JUSTICE**

Comparing Assistant