

NINTH MIZORAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



**COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES
(2024-2026)**

**FIRST REPORT
On
Aizawl-Thenzawl-Lunglei World Bank Road**

Relating to
Public Works Department

Presented to the Hon'ble Speaker on 17.12.2024

Presented to the House on.....

**Published by
Mizoram Legislative Assembly Secretariat, Aizawl**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Sl No.	Page No.
1. Composition of Committee on Estimates	(ii)
2. Introduction	(iii)
3. Chapter I	1-5
4. Chapter II	6-8
5. Chapter III	9-13
6. Chapter IV, Summary of Recommendations	14-15

(ii)

**COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES
(2024-2026)**

Chairman

Pu W. Chhuanawma

Members

1. Pu Lalmuanpuia Punte
2. Pu C. Ngunlianchunga
3. Pu Robert Romawia Royte
4. Pu Lalrintluanga Sailo
5. Pu T. Lalhlimpaia
6. Pu Jeje Lalpekhlua

Secretariat

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Pi Vanlalthantlingi | - | Commissioner & Secretary |
| 2. Pu Zothansanga Ralte | - | Additional Secretary |
| 3. Pi K. Lalmuanthangi | - | Joint Secretary |
| 4. Pu Lalrinawma Sailo | - | Deputy Secretary |
| 5. Pu Vanlalchhuanga | - | Under Secretary |
| 6. Pu Rosangliana Chhakchhuak | - | Committee Officer |

(iii)

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman, Committee on Estimates, having been authorized by the Committee to present the report on its behalf, present this First Report to the Speaker.

The present Committee was constituted on 04.03.2024 for a period of 30 months.

The previous Committee on Estimates had selected the Aizawl-Thenzawl-Lunglei World Bank Road under the Public Works Department for detailed study and had called for preliminary information and subsequent further information. It however couldn't execute the subject to completion due to expiry of its term. The present Committee on estimates, in its second sitting held on 9th May, 2024, decided to continue the on-going examination of the Aizawl-Thenzawl-Lunglei World Bank Road undertaken by the previous Committee and called for further information which were examined by the Committee. The said further information was examined by the Committee in its sitting held on 12th June, 2024 wherein the Committee raised further questions and also examined them in its subsequent sittings.

The Committee had conducted a spot visit on the Project on 3rd October, 2024 and made several observations and findings. A Departmental Discussion was held with representatives of Public Works Department on 13th November, 2024.

Altogether, the Committee held 6 sittings for the examination of the Department's replies, spot visit review, departmental discussion and preparation of this report.

The Committee, in its sitting held on 17.12.2024 considered and adopted the draft report prepared by the Secretariat.

W. CHHUANAWMA

Chairman

Committee on Estimates

REPORT

CHAPTER-I

1.1 In a hilly and landlocked state like that of Mizoram, roads serve as the backbone of economic activity, providing critical connectivity and enabling access to essential services. Improved road infrastructure directly impacts the lives of citizens by ensuring better access to education, healthcare, and markets for agricultural produce. This fosters economic empowerment and significantly enhances the quality of life, particularly in remote and previously inaccessible regions. The Public Works Department (PWD) of Mizoram has emerged as the key agency responsible for advancing road infrastructure, taking over the pioneering role of the Border Roads Organization (BRO) that initially spearheaded connectivity projects in the 1960s.

Notably, the Aizawl–Thenzawl–Lunglei State Highway, widely known as the "World Bank Road," is the largest road infrastructure project ever completed in the state. This state highway, inaugurated on May 11, 2011, by the then Chief Minister Pu Lal Thanhawla, connects Aizawl, the capital, to Lunglei, the state's second-largest town. Constructed over nine years at a cost of ₹538.401 crores, funded under the World Bank's "States Road Infrastructure Development Technical Assistance, the road has dramatically reduced the distance between Aizawl and Lunglei from 235 km to 164 km, cutting travel time from eight hours to five hours. The World Bank contributed 85% of the cost, with the remaining 15% borne by the Government of India and the Mizoram Government through a funding arrangement involving loans.

1.2 Over time, roads naturally deteriorate due to a combination of factors such as heavy traffic, weather conditions, and geological challenges, especially in hilly states like Mizoram. Constant exposure to rain, temperature variations, and soil erosion weakens road surfaces, leading to cracks, potholes, and landslides. Overloaded vehicles further strain road structures, accelerating wear and tear. Inadequate drainage systems exacerbate the problem by allowing water to accumulate and damage the pavement layers. Regular maintenance by the Public Works Department (PWD) is essential to address these issues.

As per the maintenance so required, there are several work maintenance that can be classified roughly as routine maintenance like pothole repairs, drain clearing. Periodic Maintenance such as resurfacing and strengthening of the road at regular intervals to restore its structural integrity that

help extend the lifespan of roads, while more extensive rehabilitation may be required for severely damaged sections. The Public Works Department carries out road maintenance work section-wise, tailoring interventions to specific needs and funding availability. These maintenance activities are often supported by various funding sources, depending on the type and scale of the requirement.

1.3 Recognizing the need to address and oversee the works of the Department, particularly in light of the importance placed on the matter, the Committee on Estimates of the Ninth Mizoram Legislative Assembly, in its second sitting held on 9th May 2024, resolved to continue the examination of the Aizawl-Thenzawl-Lunglei (ATL) road project initiated by the previous Committee. The previous Committee had selected this project for examination, however due to constraints of time, compounded by the need to examine and scrutinise other projects, it could not come to fruitful closure.

1.4 The previous Committee on Estimates, in its 8th sitting held on 18th November, 2021 had selected the Aizawl-Thenzawl-Lunglei World Bank Road for detailed study and had examined preliminary information on 31st January, 2022 intimated by the Department. The Committee then called for further information pertaining to the Project examined on 16th June, 2022. At its 10th sitting held on 25th August, 2022 it decided to conduct a spot study visit to the various stretches of road maintained by the Department. The Committee had resolved to conduct a spot visit as part of its examination of the project; however, it was unable to carry out the visit within the planned timeframe.

1.5 The present Committee, after detailed examination of the information collected by the previous Committee, decided to continue with the previous Committee's examination of the Aizawl-Thenzawl-Lunglei World Bank Road. In its sitting held on 12th June, 2024, the Committee deliberated and directed the Department vide letter NO.LA/EC-4/PWD/2024/1 dated 20th June, 2024 that latest information regarding maintenance and strengthening work undertaken at the ATL Road should be furnished. The information sought as below:

- i) Maintenance/Strengthening work undertaken after the submission of your letter No.H.11021/6/2022-PWD (E), dt 23.06.2022.

ii) Date of commencement of work, source of fund, status of work, amount & expenditure, expected date of completion, name of the Contractor, Defects Liability Period by the Company.

iii) If any stretch/section of the road is unmaintained, the reason may be stated.

1.6 Replies from the Public Works Department was received vide No.H.11021/6/2022-PWD (E) dated 27th June, 2024. The replies received are as follows:

i) Maintenance/Strengthening work undertaken after the submission of your letter.

Reply: The following two works are taken up after submission made on 23.06.2022.

- a) Strengthening of Aizawl-Thenzawl-Lunglei Road (30.000-51.000kmp) and
- b) Strengthening of Aizawl-Thenzawl-Lunglei Road (83.000-100.000kmp)

ii) Date of Commencement of work, source of fund, status of the work, amount & expenditure, expected date of completion, name of Contractor, Defect Liability Period by the company.

Reply: The details of work on Aizawl-Thenzawl-Lunglei Road for Sl. No. i) above are given below:

(Rs.In Lakh)

Chainage of Road	Dt. Of commencement	Source of fund	Status of Work	Amount of Contract	Expenditure	Expected Dt. Of Completion	Name of contractor	Defect Liability Period
30.00 to 51.00	20.02.2023	SEDP	Completed	1271.17	1253.49	20.07.2023	SLT Infracon Pvt Ltd.	10.11.2024
83.00 – 100.00	15.08.2023	SASCI	Completed	1322.00	65.17	15.08.2024	SLT Infracon Pvt Ltd.	3.01.2025
100 -120	July 2023	SASCI	53%	648.00	215.00	Dec 2024	Zorentluanga Zemabawk	-
120 – 143	June 2023	SASCI	90%	657.00	510.00	Dec 2024	PC Lalthantluanga Lunglei	-
143 – 160	Feb 2024	SASCI	100%	254.00	254.00	Completed	Departmental	-
100 -143	-	5054 R&B	-	360.00	-	-	-	-

iii) If any stretch/section of the road is unmaintained, the reason may be stated.

Reply: All the stretch/section of the roads are maintained by Mizoram PWD.

1.7 The information received was examined by the Committee in its sitting held on 3rd July, 2024. After detailed examination, it noted certain inconsistency and ambiguity which was not clarified in the information furnished, regarding the road stretch between 100.000kmp to 143.000kmp. Further information was asked as follows:

- i) Why is the chainage of road from kmp 100 to 143 doubly funded by both 'SASCI' and '5054 R&B'? The reason as to why ₹ 648 lakh and ₹ 657 lakh is not sufficient for 100 to 120 kmp and 120 to 143 kmp respectively?
- ii) The huge amount of difference in the Amount of contract and expenditure on chainage of road from 83 to 100 kmp?

1.8 Replies to further questions were received from the Department vide letter No.B.17011/319/24/EC (P)-PWD/5 dated 19th July, 2024 and are as follows:

i) Why is the chainage of the road from km 100 to 143 doubly funded by both SASCI and 5054 R&B? The reason as to why ₹648 lakh and ₹657 lakh is insufficient for 100 to 120 km and 120 to 143 km respectively?

Reply: a) At present, the Aizawl-Thenzawl-Lunglei (ATL) Road from chainage 100.00 km to 143.00 km is being funded by SASCI 2023-2024.

b) **Agreement Amount for Group-A (100.00 to 120.00 km): ₹647.09 lakh.** Out of which ₹273.63 lakh is for potholes/patch repair work. The rest is for Pavement Quality Concrete (PQC) and others.

Agreement Amount for Group-B (120.00 to 143.00 km): ₹658.16 lakh. Out of which ₹317.42 lakh is for potholes/patch repair work. The rest is for Pavement Quality Concrete (PQC) and others.

c) SASCI 2023-2024 estimate is based on pothole data collected in 2022.

d) The exceptional intensity and duration of the monsoon season during 2023 significantly impacted road conditions, resulting in an unforeseen rise in the number and size of potholes across the road and have created a situation where the quantity of materials allocated for potholes repair in the Estimate and Agreement of SASCI 2023-2024 fall short of the actual demand even before the onset of monsoon 2024. Hence, requiring additional fund from 5054 R7B amounting to **Rs 170.00 lakhs. – A.**

e) Moreover, from the experience of 2023 monsoon, it is strongly expected that during 2024 monsoon, excessive rainfall and subsequent water logging may likely cause accelerated deterioration, resulting in a higher frequency of pothole formation. So, in order to safeguard the pavement during monsoon 2024, from the past experience it is roughly proposed to set aside another additional fund from 5054 R&B to restore potholes during monsoon in between 100.00 – 143.00 kmp amounting to **₹ 190.00 lakh – B.**

f) Hence, additional fund of above, **A + B = ₹170 + ₹190.00 lakh = ₹ 360.00 lakhs** is proposed to the Government to be sanctioned from 5054 R&B.

ii) The huge amount of difference in the contract amount and expenditure for the chainage of road from 83 to 100 kmp?

Reply: The huge amount of difference between the contract amount and expenditure for the chainage from km 83 to 100 is due to the pending of Contractor Bill which will be disbursed within 28th July, 2024.

1.9 After thorough examination, the Committee in its sitting held on 5th September, 2024 decided that the Contract Agreement for the road works between chainage 100 to 120 km and 120 to 143 km should be obtained from the Department. Additionally, the Committee decided to conduct a spot study visit to Aizawl – Thenzawl – Lunglei World Bank Road on 3rd October, 2024. The said Contract Agreement was submitted vide letter No.B.12020/8/2024-PWD (T) dated 23.10.2024 (*Contract Agreement kept at the Secretariat for ready reference*)

CHAPTER-II

2.1 As highlighted in the previous chapter, the Committee conducted a spot visit to study the Aizawl-Thenzawl-Lunglei World Bank Road on 3rd October, 2024.

2.2 FINDINGS on each chainage/stretch of roads summarized as follows:

2.2.1 **30:000 to 51:000 kmp: Sateek to Hmuifang.**

The Committee during the spot study, observed that for 30.000 to 51.000 kmp stretch of the Aizawl-Thenzawl-Lunglei Road, the project's execution aligns well with the key milestones as per the information provided by the Department. The date of commencement was recorded as 20.02.2023, and the expected date of completion was 20.07.2023, both of which have been met on time. The status of work shows that this section was completed efficiently, with a contract amount of ₹1271.17 lakhs, of which ₹1253.49 lakhs have been expended. It further found that the overall condition of the 30.000 to 51.000 kmp stretch was satisfactory, with the road being generally well-maintained. No major areas of concern were identified, and the road largely adhered to the expected standards of quality. However, minor potholes were observed in a few areas, though these appeared to require only routine maintenance. In some sections, water puddles were noted, which, if not addressed, could compromise the long-term durability of the road by potentially leading to the formation of larger potholes over time. Additionally, while the drainage systems were functional, certain drains were found to be clogged with debris.

2.2.2 **83:000 to 100.000 kmp: Chalkhan to Kanghmun South.**

The Committee found that while some repairs have been done, the overall quality of the road surface has yet to undergo significant improvement due to the delay in starting Pavement Quality Control (PQC). This delay according to the Department is due to specific technical requirements and insufficiency in the fund allocated. The current maintenance focuses primarily on addressing potholes and patching specific sections, but without more substantial work on the Pavement Quality Concrete itself, durability of the road in its entirety remains a concern. The Committee was made aware of the various problems faced and it decided to consider these problems in its review meeting.

2.2.3 **100.000 to 120.000 kmp: Kanghmun South to Mualthuam North. (Group A of 100-140 kmp)**

The Committee during the spot visit, observed that patch/Potholes Repair at various locations has already been completed at an amount of ₹273.63 lakh while Pavement Quality Concrete at an amount of ₹ 373.45 lakh designated in several PQC locations is not yet started. PQC locations designated are as follows:

- i) **104.900 kmp:** At this location, it was observed that the patch/pothole repair is completed but has not started the PQC work although is a designated location for the same work. The Department explained to the Committee that it is not feasible to repair one half of the road while keeping the other operational due to the narrow width of road at this location. A diversion of the road is necessary to carry out repairs, and the Department indicated that with the Committee's support, the required diversion could be facilitated to enable the repair work.
- ii) **Between 111.100 kmp & 112.000 kmp:** The Committee observed that the PQC work has not yet begun, even though there are no apparent logistical or structural constraints. Unlike the 104.900 kmp stretch, where the narrow road width justifies the delay, the road at 111.100 kmp is wide enough to commence work without requiring any diversion or special arrangements. Furthermore, this stretch is one of the most deteriorated sections of the Aizawl-Thenzawl-Lunglei Road, posing a serious hazard to road users. The Committee expressed concern over the delay and emphasized that no valid excuses can be offered by the Department for the lack of progress in this area. With the monsoon season gradually withdrawing, the Department assured the Committee that they will prompt the contractor to start PQC work as soon as possible.
- iii) **114.000 Kmp:** The Committee noted that pothole/patch repairs have been completed, but the PQC work has yet to start. Although, the condition at 114.000 Kmp is comparatively less severe than the previous two locations, it still requires attention to ensure long-term durability and safety.
- iv) **Between 117.100 Kmp & 117.400 Kmp:** The Committee observed that pothole/patch repair work is completed. However, it became evident that additional repairs were necessary due to monsoon damage and that pothole/patch repair is ongoing, highlighting the lack of immediate follow-up with PQC after the first round of patch repairs. The Committee witnessed workers actively engaged in these repairs during the spot study (Locations both at Mualthuam North)

2.2.4 120.00 to 143.00 kmp: 1 km ahead of Tlawng to Mausen. (Group B of 100 to 140 kmp)

The Committee during the spot visit, observed that patch/potholes repair at various locations has already been completed at an amount of ₹ 317.42 lakh. Pavement Quality Concrete at an amount of ₹ 340.74 lakh designated in two PQC locations is not yet started while 4 locations out of six is completed. The Committee noted that PQC work has been completed in sections like 120.50, 123.00, 123.300, 125.600 Kmp. In areas where PQC work has been completed, the road quality was largely satisfactory, though some minor unevenness was detected. However, other designated PQC locations such as 122.100 Kmp and 122.200 Kmp, remain pending for PQC. The location of Group B which was spot verified by the Committee, is situated near the Centre of Excellence for Fruits, Lunglei. Although work has not yet started at this site, the Department has outlined plans for the upcoming repair and reconstruction efforts. The strategy involves blocking half of the road at a time, allowing the remaining half to continue supporting transportation, particularly for vehicles that rely on this route. This phased approach will enable Pavement Quality Concrete (PQC) work to proceed without entirely disrupting traffic flow.

The Committee during the spot study, was apprised by the Department that Both Group A and Group B have received extensions for their completion deadlines (Group A: 20.12.2024, Group B: 23.11.2024).

2.2.5 143.00 to 160.00 kmp: Mausen to Kikawn, Lunglei.

The Committee observed specific issues within the stretch between 148.00 km and 150.00 km. In this location, it was noted that the road segment faced differential settlements.

CHAPTER - III

3.1 On 17th October, 2024, the Committee on Estimates, a review meeting regarding the Spot Study Visit of Committee on Estimates to Aizawl-Thenzawl-Lunglei World Bank Road on 03.10.2024 was held. A Departmental Discussion with the Public Works Department (PWD) was conducted on 7th November relating to the same subject as decided in the said previous sitting. Representatives of the Public Works Department were as follows:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 1. K. Lalthawmmawia | - | Commissioner & Secretary |
| 2. Er. Lalsangliana Chhakchhuak | - | Engineer-in-Chief |
| 3. Er. Robin Lalrinawma | - | S.E, National Highway |
| 4. Er. Pazawna | - | S.E, Lunglei Circle |
| 5. Er. C. Lalengzauva | - | E.E, Hmuifang Division |
| 6. Er. SR Lalramthanga | - | E.E. Lunglei Road Division |

3.2 Consequent to the opening remarks by the Chairman and the Members to set the tone of the discussion, the Committee commenced a detailed inquiry into the progress and status of the Aizawl-Thenzawl-Lunglei World Bank Road, directing their questions to the Public Works Department (PWD). The Committee initiated its inquiries, beginning with the status and details certain minor potholes within **30 to 51 km** stretch of the road, though no major area of concern was identified. In response, the Department acknowledged that no specific improvements had been carried out on the potholes identified by the Committee during the spot study visit and subsequently before the DLP which ended on 10th November, 2024. However, the Department emphasized that the security deposit retained by the Department as a guarantee for final project quality maintenance would not be released to the Contractor until all final repairs identified during the DLP are satisfactorily completed. Furthermore, the Department assured the Committee that they had issued a notice to the Contractor as the security deposit had become eligible for release based on the project timeline, the notice also stipulated that unless the required maintenance work is undertaken and verified, the security deposit would remain withheld. The Committee was very much satisfied with the response regarding this stretch. ***As such, the Committee recommends that the Department to take prompt and proactive measures to ensure the Contractor immediately undertakes the required repairs identified during the Defects Liability Period. The Department should actively engage with the Contractor to expedite the maintenance work and closely monitor the progress to guarantee timely completion. The***

Committee further recommends that the Department exercise strict enforcement of the stipulated conditions, including withholding the security deposit until all repairs are satisfactorily verified, to uphold the quality and durability of the project.

3.3 The Committee then shifted its focus to the status of the **83 to 100** kmp stretch of the Aizawl-Thenzawl-Lunglei World Bank Road project. This section, completed on August 15, 2024, is currently under the Defect Liability Period (DLP), which extends until January 3, 2025. Despite some repairs being undertaken, the overall quality of the road surface remains suboptimal due to delays in initiating Pavement Quality Control (PQC) as seen during the spot visit. The Committee inquired about the status, progress and plans for this stretch. In response, the Department stated that the Contractor is currently in mobilization phase, they have rented a base in Thenzawl for their accomodation, and materials such as stones for pothole repairs will be sourced from Zawng-ek-Kham Quarry, Maubuang. The Department further assured the Committee that repair works will be undertaken according to standards as the Contractor being SLT Infracon Ltd. known for high quality works which was also observed by the Committee during the spot visit. ***While noting these assurances, the Committee recommends that the Department need to expedite works to address the defects during the Defect Liability Period. It further recommended that the Department should closely monitor the progress, enforce strict compliance with quality requirements, and address the issues observed during the spot visit.***

3.4 The Committee then highlighted the status of the 100–120 km section (Group A) of the ATL Road, where patch/pothole repairs costing ₹273.63 lakh have been completed. However, Pavement Quality Concrete (PQC) work, allocated ₹373.45 lakh, has yet to begin across seven locations under the contractor Pu Zoremthuanga. Delays were attributed to the contractor's divided focus on other projects, though efforts are now being redirected to the ATL Road with equipment mobilized to key sites. At the 104.900 km point, PQC work has not commenced due to the narrow width of the road (5.50 meters), which hinders repairs while maintaining traffic flow. The Department has proposed road diversions via Hnahthial Road but faces challenges due to landslides and debris caused by Cyclone Remal, rendering the newly constructed road partially non-functional. The Executive Engineer, Lunglei Road Division, has sought cooperation from District Commissioners to address the issue, while the Department requested the Committee's support to expedite diversion

arrangements. *The Committee recommends that the Department should expedite efforts to address the challenges delaying PQC work on the 100–120 km section of the ATL Road. The Department should prioritize clearing debris and resolving landslide issues on the proposed Hnahthial diversion route to make it operational. Additionally, the Department must coordinate effectively with the District Commissioners of Lunglei, Serchhip, and Hnahthial to ensure necessary approvals and logistics are in place for the diversion. The Committee urges the Department to ensure that all preparations are completed promptly to avoid further delays and to meet the extended project deadline.*

3.5 The Committee expressed concern over the delay in commencing PQC work between 111.100 km and 112.000 km, despite the absence of logistical or structural challenges. The Committee voiced dissatisfaction with the lack of progress, noting no valid reason for the delay. In response, the Department stated that they had urged the Contractor, Pu Zoremthuanga, to begin PQC work and reported that equipment mobilization had commenced at several designated PQC locations within this stretch, including 114.00 km, 117.10 km, and 117.40 km. *The Committee recommends that the Department ensure immediate commencement of PQC work between 111.100 km and 112.000 km and closely monitor progress to prevent further delays. The Department must hold the Contractor accountable for timely execution and adherence to the project timeline, particularly in areas where no logistical or structural challenges exist.*

3.6 The Department also stated that the Contractor at 120.000 to 143.000 kmps, Pu PC Lalthantluanga had started PQC work at 122.100 and 122.200 which are the remaining two locations out of 6 in total. However, the Department expressed with regret that even with the extended deadline granted to both Contractors, the current pace of work raised concerns about their ability to complete the tasks within the stipulated timeframe. *The Committee recommends that the Department take urgent steps to accelerate the pace of work on the 120–143 km section of the ATL Road. The Department should ensure that the Contractor intensifies efforts to complete the remaining PQC work at 122.100 km and 122.200 km promptly.*

3.7 The Committee found that severe structural deficiencies in the road stretch between 148.00 km and 150.00 km, including uneven road base, cracked pavement, and mud pumping under light traffic resulting in differential settlement

of the RCC, necessitating urgent reconstruction. The Department acknowledged these issues, attributing them to inadequate funding during initial construction in 2017-18, which resulted in substandard work. To address this, the Department proposed a reconstruction plan involving sub-grade stabilization, improved drainage, and multiple layers of base and bituminous materials. A concept paper seeking ₹469.74 crore under the SASCI scheme has been submitted to the 16th Finance Commission for funding in 2024-25. ***The Committee recommends that the Public Works Department (PWD) prioritize reconstruction of the said location to address the severe structural deficiencies and ensure long-term durability. The Department should actively pursue funding approval under the SASCI scheme and simultaneously explore alternative funding sources to avoid delays. Regular updates on the progress of funding applications and reconstruction efforts should be provided to the Committee to ensure transparency and accountability.***

3.8 The Committee proceeded to inquire about the utilization of the Supplementary sanctioned 5054 R&B fund of ₹3.60 crore allocated for the stretch between 100.000 Kmp and 143.000 Kmp, specifically for addressing potholes and PQC. In response, the Department acknowledged that the allocated amount was insufficient even for comprehensive pothole repairs. They further elaborated that this limitation was already anticipated. To address public dissatisfaction, the Contractors were instructed to carry out pothole repairs repeatedly, year after year as substandard bituminous road works often become a contentious issue.

3.9 The Committee concluded its discussion by addressing a longstanding case involving the Aizawl-Thenzawl-Lunglei (ATL) Road, which dated back to 2001. This case pertained to a joint venture between Bhagheeratha Engineering Ltd. (BEL) and Ashoka Buildcon Ltd., and their contract with the Public Works Department (PWD) for road construction using World Bank funds. Due to slow progress and violations of the contract terms, the PWD terminated the joint venture's contract on June 15, 2005. Following the termination, a security deposit held in Kochi Bank and an unrepaid advance totaling ₹22.88 crore were claimed by the PWD. The dispute was subsequently litigated across Dispute Resolution Board, Aizawl District Court, and the Guwahati High Court, with the PWD ultimately prevailing in the case. The performance guarantee submitted by BEL was placed in a fixed deposit by the PWD, and over the years, the principal amount accrued to over ₹90 crore by 2024. As part of an agreement between BEL and the PWD in July 2019, a joint auction was conducted for the

aggregated funds. The proceeds from this auction were also placed in a fixed deposit, with the principal amount reaching ₹1.28 crore. This sum is expected to mature in the first week of December 2024. The Committee then questioned the Department about the current status and intended utilization of these funds. The Department confirmed the details and acknowledged that there was no specific earmarked proposal for the utilization of the funds. ***The Committee firmly recommends that the accumulated funds, including the matured fixed deposit amount, be utilized exclusively for the Aizawl-Thenzawl-Lunglei (ATL) World Bank Road project. These funds must not be diverted to any other projects or purposes. The Committee emphasizes that such funds should directly benefit the ATL Road, ensuring that the resources allocated for this project are used effectively and in alignment with the original funding intent.***

CHAPTER-IV

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

3.2 *As such, the Committee recommends that the Department to take prompt and proactive measures to ensure the Contractor immediately undertakes the required repairs identified during the Defects Liability Period. The Department should actively engage with the Contractor to expedite the maintenance work and closely monitor the progress to guarantee timely completion. The Committee further recommends that the Department exercise strict enforcement of the stipulated conditions, including withholding the security deposit until all repairs are satisfactorily verified, to uphold the quality and durability of the project.*

3.3 *While noting these assurances, the Committee recommends that the Department need to expedite works to address the defects during the Defect Liability Period. It further recommended that the Department should closely monitor the progress, enforce strict compliance with quality requirements, and address the issues observed during the spot visit.*

3.4 *The Committee recommends that the Department should expedite efforts to address the challenges delaying PQC work on the 100–120 km section of the ATL Road. The Department should prioritize clearing debris and resolving landslide issues on the proposed Hnahthial diversion route to make it operational. Additionally, the Department must coordinate effectively with the District Commissioners of Lunglei, Serchhip, and Hnahthial to ensure necessary approvals and logistics are in place for the diversion. The Committee urges the Department to ensure that all preparations are completed promptly to avoid further delays and to meet the extended project deadline.*

3.5 *The Committee recommends that the Department ensure immediate commencement of PQC work between 111.100 km and 112.000 km and closely monitor progress to prevent further delays. The Department must hold the Contractor accountable for timely execution and adherence to the project timeline, particularly in areas where no logistical or structural challenges exist.*

3.6 *The Committee recommends that the Department take urgent steps to accelerate the pace of work on the 120–143 km section of the ATL Road. The Department should ensure that the Contractor intensifies efforts to complete the remaining PQC work at 122.100 km and 122.200 km promptly.*

3.7 *The Committee recommends that the Public Works Department (PWD) prioritize reconstruction of the said location to address the severe structural deficiencies and ensure long-term durability. The Department should actively pursue funding approval under the SASCI scheme and simultaneously explore alternative funding sources to avoid delays. Regular updates on the progress of funding applications and reconstruction efforts should be provided to the Committee to ensure transparency and accountability.*

3.9 *The Committee firmly recommends that the accumulated funds, including the matured fixed deposit amount, be utilized exclusively for the Aizawl-Thenzawl-Lunglei (ATL) World Bank Road project. These funds must not be diverted to any other projects or purposes. The Committee emphasizes that such funds should directly benefit the ATL Road, ensuring that the resources allocated for this project are used effectively and in alignment with the original funding intent.*