

## Railway already unstable

29 July 2006

(Guardian) Less than a month after its opening, the Golmud-Lhasa railway has become unstable in places because the foundations are sinking into the softening permafrost soil, Chinese railway ministry spokesman Wang Yongping told the Beijing News. Although the railway was hailed by Chinese president Hu Jintao as an engineering miracle, it was always likely to be harder to maintain than to build. The line depends on coolants to stop the permafrost upon which it rests from melting, but global warming has raised temperatures in the mountain region faster than expected. As well as damaging concrete pillars and bridges, this adds to the problem of sand dunes which encroach upon the track. Yaks, thousands of which graze along the tracks and sometimes wander across them are also a potential threat to the railway. *"These are a danger to passengers on the train"*, Mr Wang said. The report did not mention whether such hazards would lead to a restriction of services or new counter-measures.

---

© 2008 TibetInfoNet (Reg.Nr. BN8490, Germany). All rights reserved.

TibetInfoNet is an independent information service that provides news and analysis of the current political, economic, social, environmental and human rights situation in Tibet.

**Website:** [www.tibetinfonet.net](http://www.tibetinfonet.net)  
**Phone:** +44 (0) 20 300 206 33  
**Fax:** +49 (0) 2238 9494466  
**Email:** [tin@tibetinfonet.net](mailto:tin@tibetinfonet.net)