

## Angul-Sukinda rail line will benefit millions: MD

ANGUL: THE upcoming new rail line between Angul to Sukinda, spread over the districts of Angul, Dhenkanal and Jajpur and passing via Kamakhyanagar and Duburi, over the river Brahmani is destined to directly or indirectly benefit millions of people of the State, said DK Samantray, Managing Director, Angul-Sukinda Railway Line.

He added that this line will provide a great fillip to the steel industry of the State. Besides, a sizeable population of the state will get access to the cheapest and faster mode of transportation. This new line can open up the possibility of substantially reducing the distance between the local populace and the seat of power, Bhubaneswar in real time sense. "With the availability of rail connectivity, entrepreneurs will be attracted to set up medium and large scale industries in the region, thereby boosting up local economy and employment opportunities. The Angul Sukinda rail line is being constructed under PPP mode, (Public Private Participation), where funding will be arranged mostly from outside Railway Budget provisions. Besides, Railways (through RVNL) and Jindal Steel & Power Limited, the State government in association with OMC and IDCO have directly participated in this project by subscribing a sizeable amount of equities", stated Samantray.

He urged the State government to be serious about the new rail line and ensure that it is completed on time. "For the resources required over and above the equity capital, Angul Sukinda Railway Limited will raise loan (debt) from market to enable the completion of the rail line in target time", said the Managing Director, adding this will be a clear departure from the hitherto practice of funding rail line projects of the state through railway budget where in paucity of fund is always the culprit of causing considerable time and cost overrun. The experience of Sambalpur-Talcher line or that of Lanjigarh-Junagarh is a classic case of such delay as both the rail lines took over two decades for completion. In contrast, in a PPP mode project like Angul Sukinda rail line, as the required fund is generated through equity contribution from the stake holders and by raising loan (debt) from market, scarcity of fund will not be a serious constraint. A couple of such PPP mode based rail lines have already been successfully constructed and are in operation in Gujarat in record time. Therefore PPP model is a proven model of rail-line construction, said Samantray.

He added that land acquisition is the major issue to be sorted for this project. "Once this aspect is addressed there will be no stopping to this project work moving on a fast track path", stated Samantray.