

# Angul-Sukinda line on fast track with funds

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**Bhubaneswar:** Hopes peaked for expeditious construction of 104-km Angul-Sukinda railway line following the decision of Container Corporation of India (Concor) to invest money in the project.

Chairman-cum-managing director of Concor Anil Kumar Gupta handed over a consent letter in this regard to Dilip Kumar Samantaray, managing director of Angul-Sukinda Railway Limited, a special body created to undertake the project, in New Delhi early this week, official sources said here.

Concor's investment will be to the tune of 26% equity share, amounting to Rs 156 crore. Gupta, in the letter, said Rs 100 crore will be released forthwith.

Concor, which is developing two depots at Parjang and Duburi, is a Navratna PSU of government of India.

The Angul-Sukinda rail line is considered a vital infrastructure project aimed at faster movement of iron ore from Keonjhar-Banspani belt and coal from Talcher belt through an alternative route



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to industries in Kalinganagar and adjoining areas. The new line would open rail travel facilities for nearly 105 villages, falling along it.

The project in 2008 was estimated to cost Rs 850 crore.

As the cash-strapped railway could barely do anything, it was decided to build the project on public-private partnership (PPP) mode.

Trouble started when a private company withdrew from the venture two years back. The project cost, meanwhile, escalated to Rs

1,600 crore, including Rs 250 crore interest estimated on a proposed loan amount of Rs 800-900 crore. "Besides Concor, Rail Vikas Nigam of the railways, Odisha government, Odisha Mining Corporation, JSPL and Idco are the other stake holders in this joint-venture," railway sources said.

"We are confident of completing the project by June 2018. It is going to be a self-sufficient line," said Samantaray.

"The project, once completed, will show the path for other such projects on PPP mode without depending on regular railway budget," he said. The new rail line begins from Budhapanka on Angul side and ends at Baghuapala near Sukinda.

It has about 78 bridges, including a major one being built over the Bramhani at a cost of Rs 90 crore. "The Bramhani bridge work is progressing well. Land acquisition work is over. Earthwork has started," Samantaray said. The sources said Narendra Modi government has categorized it a 'priority project' being monitored by 'project monitoring group'.