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Forest Clearance for Angul-Sukinda Rly Line

The project to link crucial industrial and mining belts of Angul, Keonjhar and Kalinga Nagar, is on track to meet July 2018 deadline

Express News Service

Bhubaneswar: The Angul-Sukinda railway line project has finally got wind in its sails with grant of forest clearance and work permission by the Government.

“The project has gained forest clearance from the Centre for the entire 104 km stretch at one go, in a first of its kind approval in the country. We have also received work permission from the State Government last Friday and are set to start project execution in full flow immediately,” Managing Director, Angul-Sukinda Railway

Limited (ASRL), Dilip Samantray said here on Tuesday.

Samantray, who was attending the SMART Infra Odisha conclave organised by Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) here, told mediapersons, the clearances have given the project a much needed momentum. The project will link crucial industrial and mining belts of Angul, Keonjhar and Kalinga Nagar.

The line is on track to meet the July 2018 deadline for commissioning.

With land acquisition for the 104 km stretch encom-

passing around 1470 acre completed, preliminary work had already commenced excluding the areas that needed Forest clearance. Though in patches, as high as 31 per cent of the land acquired came under forest area and required statutory clearance by the Centre.

“With the PMO directly monitoring project implementation, the clearance was

expedited. Meanwhile, we have already completed preliminary earth work on 15 per cent of land and are starting work on construction of bridges. While 78 bridges are to be constructed under the project, 60 per cent work has been completed on the major railway bridge on Brahmani river,” Samantray said.

The ASRL Chief, however,

noted with concern an emerging problem in the way of renewed compensation demand by locals for the acquired land. While compensation has already been paid as per the old law, the land losers have begun to demand the compensation under the New Land Acquisition Act and filing litigation in the courts.

“Some recent developments are quite disturbing and require a proactive approach by the Government to ensure that it does not affect the railway line work. We have drawn the attention of the Government to the

problem,” Samantray said.

The PPP mode project cost has already seen an escalation from the initially estimated ₹1,100 crore to ₹1,500 crore due to delays on various grounds from land acquisition to back out by private partners. The present special purpose vehicle (SPV) now comprises Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd (RVNL), Container Corporation of India, Jindal Steel and Power Ltd (JSPL) and State Government as equity partners. The equity component is to the tune of ₹600 crore while the rest capital would be raised from loans.

