

Seventeenth Loksabha

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Title: Regarding demand to provide for the retention of the South Coast Railway Zone with headquarters at Visakhapatnam

DR. BEESETTI VENKATA SATYAVATHI (ANAKAPALLE): Sir, fulfilling the long-felt aspirations of the people of north coastal Andhra Pradesh and fulfilling the pressing need of the newly bifurcated State of Andhra Pradesh, to have a separate railway zone, the Union Government has announced the formation of a new South Coast Railway Zone with its headquarters at Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh. I thank, on behalf of the State of Andhra Pradesh and the people of Uttara Andhra, the Minister of Railways and also the Union Government for this.

This move shall go a long way in ensuring the development of the State in a balanced manner, in synchrony with the wishes of the State Government under the leadership of our dynamic Chief Minister, Shri Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy Garu. However, we wish to bring to your notice that the proposed merger of Andhra portion of bifurcated Waltair Division with Vijayawada Division may not be in the best interest of the State of Andhra Pradesh and the people of Uttara Andhra. Being a 125-year-old Divisional Headquarters, with many important A1 category stations located there, this move, if implemented, may cause concern among the people of north coastal Andhra Pradesh along with the railway employees. Given its significance in handling many engineering challenges due to difficult terrain in the Eastern Ghats section, along with providing connection between the ports and the iron ore belts located in the hinterlands, such a move would also be against the spirit of Item 8 of Schedule VIII of Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014. Therefore, hon. Chairperson, Sir, through you, we urge the Union Government to provide for the retention of the bifurcated Waltair Division as a separate division alongside the formation of a new South Coast Railway Zone with headquarters at Visakhapatnam.