

## **Regarding realignment of Gunupur-Therubali railway line**

**SHRI SAPTAGIRI SANKAR ULAKA (KORAPUT):** I rise today to bring to the urgent attention of this House a matter of immense significance for the people of South Odisha, namely the realignment of the sanctioned Gunupur-Theruvali Railway Project to pass through Padmapur, Gudari and Bissam Cuttack.

We welcome this much-needed railway project in its current alignment, but it fails to serve any meaningful purpose. Instead, it bypasses densely populated, economically active, and historically significant areas, leaving out the very people who would benefit from this project.

This demand has been approved by the General Manager of East Coast Railway. The Final Location Survey has also been completed confirming that with a minor 17 kms. deviation, the railway line can pass through Padmapur, Gudari, Ramanaguda, Bissam Cuttack and other key blocks directly benefiting over six lakh people in Rayagada and Gajapati districts. The current line passes through sparsely populated and barren areas. In contrast, the realignment *via* Padmapur and Bissam Cuttack would serve as a catalyst for economic growth, improving access to trade, education, and healthcare. This region is agriculture-intensive, commercially significant, and historically important, yet its exclusion from the railway project is unjustifiable.

The sanctioned alignment of the Gunupur-Theruvali railway line, which includes stations at Gunupur, Penkam, Ramanaguda, Bankili, Durgi, and Theruvali passes through thinly inhabited and barren areas. With minor realignment, it can pass through stations like Gunupur, Chalakamba, Padmapur, Bissam Cuttack, Gumuda, Penkam, Ramanaguda, Bankili, Durgi and Theruvali, which follows a geographically logical and development-focused route directly benefiting over six lakh people in Rayagada and Gajapati districts.

I would urge the hon. Minister of Railways to issue a formal directive to re-examine the alignment considering that the GM of East Coast Railways had approved the Final Location Survey. This small realignment will bring enormous socio-economic benefits to the region and prevent yet another case of public infrastructure failing to serve the public needs.

I would urge the Government to act immediately and not let another crucial infrastructure project bypass the rightful aspirations of the people. Let development be inclusive, people-centric, and equitable. Thank you so much.