

‘Maruti would have faced capacity hurdle without rail infra’

50,000 truck trips will be cut annually due to dedicated railway line



The country's first automobile in-plant railway siding at Suzuki Motor Gujarat in Ahmedabad

PHOTO: PTI

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New Delhi, 12 March

Maruti Suzuki India Limited (MSIL) would have faced a capacity bottleneck had a rail infrastructure not been put up at its Hansalpur plant in Gujarat, Rahul Bharti, executive officer (corporate affairs), said on Tuesday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had on Monday inaugurated India's first in-plant automobile railway siding at the Hansalpur plant via video-conferencing. The siding will allow MSIL to transport 300,000 cars annually via railways. The project cost ₹1,081 crore.

“Honestly, even if we do not save anything due to this project, we would still be very happy as it gives us scalability. It is a very safe, efficient, and clean way of transporting cars. If the rail infrastructure was not there, we would have hit a capacity bottleneck. Even without financial savings, it is a better way of transporting cars,” said Bharti.

Two months back, India's largest carmaker had said it

would establish a new production line at the Hansalpur plant at a cost of ₹3,200 crore to increase its annual manufacturing capacity from 750,000 units to 1 million units. The new line will start operation from 2026-27.

When asked if MSIL saves money while transporting cars through railways instead of roads, Bharti replied, “It varies a lot. It depends on sectors, train schedules, etc. However, yes, there are some savings.”

In the first 11 months of 2023-24, MSIL transported 409,000 units through railways and the remaining by road. Rail transportation is expected to significantly increase due to the new line.

The railway siding project comprised three phases: First, converting the 65 km-long Katosan-Becharaji-Ranuj railway line from narrow gauge to broad gauge; second, establishing a 2.5 km-long line from the main line to the Hansalpur plant's boundary wall; and third, laying approximately 5.9 km of tracks inside the plant, extending to the boundary wall.