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NFIR

Registration No. : RTU/Nnn/31/2012

National Federation of Indian Railwaymen

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Affiliated to : Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) & International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)

No. NFIR/II/95/2026

Dated: 17/10/2026

The Hon'ble Prime Minister of India,
Government of India,
Prime Minister's Office,
Seva Teerth
New Delhi-110011

Hon'ble Sir,

Sub: Kind intervention to address the growing concerns of Railway employees arising from staff shortages, excessive workload, arbitrary policy decisions and deterioration of industrial relations – reg.

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The National Federation of Indian Railwaymen (NFIR) seeks your kind intervention in addressing the growing discontent among Railway employees arising from a series of policy decisions of the Government of India and Railway Ministry, coupled with persistent staff shortages, excessive workload and inadequate attention to the legitimate concerns of the workforce. These developments have created an atmosphere of agitation among Railway employees and are placing an increasingly unsustainable burden on the existing workforce, with serious implications for employee welfare, industrial relations and the safe and efficient Railway operations.

Hon'ble Sir, it may kindly be appreciated that Indian Railways is not merely a passenger and freight transportation system but a vital strategic asset of the Nation. Besides serving the transportation needs of millions of citizens and facilitating the movement of essential commodities, it plays a crucial role in ensuring the timely movement of defence personnel, equipment and supplies to border areas, particularly during situations requiring urgent national response. Such a vital national transport network must be strengthened and augmented in a planned and sustained manner, without compromising operational safety, manpower requirements or service reliability.

The operational character of Indian Railways and the demanding nature of Railway employees' duties have also been acknowledged by successive Railway Ministers. In his D.O. letter to the Hon'ble Finance Minister, Shri Suresh Prabhu, the then Minister for Railways, observed:

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"Railway is an operational organization required to run round the clock throughout the year irrespective of weather conditions. The duties of Railway employees are not only critical and complex but also hazardous at times."

Similarly, Shri Mallikarjun Kharge, former Minister for Railways, in his communication to the Hon'ble Finance Minister, highlighted the demanding conditions under which Railway employees discharge their duties:

"Railways is an operational organisation required to be run round the clock throughout the year. Railway employees have to work in inhospitable conditions, braving extreme weather, unfriendly law and order scenario and inherent risk associated with the Railway operations itself as in the Armed Forces, many have to stay away from their families for long periods while performing duties in areas where adequate facilities are lacking."

These observations underscore the distinctive operational demands placed on Railway employees and the importance of ensuring adequate manpower, satisfactory working conditions and necessary institutional support. The round-the-clock operations of Indian Railways cannot be sustained indefinitely by placing an ever-increasing burden on an inadequately staffed workforce. Restrictions on the creation of posts, continued vacancies and arbitrary surrender of sanctioned posts must therefore be reconsidered in the context of actual workload, the commissioning of new assets, operational safety and the strategic responsibilities of the Railways.

The Federation is not seeking manpower augmentation in isolation from operational requirements; it is urging that staffing decisions be based on a realistic assessment of the work that Indian Railways is required to perform. A robust railway system requires commensurate human resources alongside investment in infrastructure and technology. Any approach that expands assets and operational responsibilities without providing the necessary manpower risks placing employee safety, operational efficiency and the long-term interests of the Nation under avoidable strain.

The concerns outlined below were discussed at the Working Committee Meeting of the Federation on 11th August, 2026 at New Delhi. The members expressed deep concern that the continued imposition of additional responsibilities on the existing staff, without commensurate manpower support and adequate consultation with recognised Federations, is adversely affecting working conditions and employee morale.

1. Filling up of vacancies:

Large-scale vacancies continue to persist in various categories of Railway employees. The Federation urges the Government to ensure the early filling up of vacancies, particularly in safety, operational and other essential categories. Continued reliance on existing staff to manage the work of vacant posts places excessive pressure on employees and may compromise operational efficiency and safety.

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2. Creation of posts commensurate with workload and new assets:

The Federation is deeply concerned over the restrictions on the creation of new posts, which require approval of the Ministry of Finance, even when new assets are commissioned and additional workload is generated. This approach is untenable in the context of an already acute shortage of staff against existing requirements.

Additional workload is being entrusted to the existing workforce without corresponding manpower augmentation. The resulting pressure adversely affects the provision of adequate rest and leave, particularly for employees in intensive, operational and safety-related categories. The Federation accordingly urges that posts be created in accordance with actual workload and the commissioning of new assets, and that existing staffing yardsticks/norms may atleast be implemented without delay.

3. Working hours, duty rosters and rest provisions:

The prescribed working hours, duty rosters and rest provisions must be implemented strictly, particularly in the case of running staff and other operational categories. Staff shortages should not become a justification for compromising statutory or prescribed rest requirements. Adequate rest is essential for employee health, alertness and the safe operation of trains.

4. Arbitrary surrender of posts:

The Federation strongly objects to the surrender of posts without a proper assessment of actual workload, safety requirements and manpower needs in the concerned departments. Decisions to abolish or surrender posts should be based on a transparent, objective and work-based assessment, with due consultation with recognised Federations. Indiscriminate reduction of sanctioned strength, can aggravate existing shortages and further burden the remaining employees.

5. Improvement of Railway medical facilities:

The condition of Railway hospitals and health units requires urgent attention. The Federation calls for adequate availability of doctors, para medical staff, medicines, diagnostic facilities and specialist services so that Railway employees and their eligible dependants receive timely and appropriate medical care. Medical facilities are an essential component of employee welfare and should be strengthened in line with the needs of the Railway workforce and its beneficiaries.

6. Promotion, career progression and financial benefits:

The Federation has drawn attention to delays in promotions, against promotional grades, pending cadre restructuring issues and delays in conducting departmental selections. Such delays adversely affect career progression and employee morale. The Federation requests timely completion of promotional exercises and early settlement of pending matters relating to the cadre restructuring lateral inductions and ensuring availability of recruitment panels.

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7. Meaningful consultations and healthy industrial relations:

The Federation is seriously concerned that several decisions affecting Railway employees have been taken by Railway Ministry without adequate consultation with the recognised Federations and Trade Unions. Such unilateral decisions have adversely affected large sections of the workforce and weakened the established consultative mechanism.

The decision relating to Kilometerage Allowance for Loco Pilots and Train Managers staff is a specific example of an issue having significant implications for employees and industrial relations. The Federation urges the Government to ensure that recognised Federations are meaningfully consulted before decisions affecting service conditions, allowances and other employee-related matters are finalised. Respect for established consultation mechanisms is essential for maintaining harmonious industrial relations and preventing avoidable disputes and agitation.

8. Privatisation and outsourcing:

The Federation expresses concern over indiscriminate outsourcing and privatisation of Railway activities, particularly where these may affect safety, employment security, accountability and the long-term interests of Indian Railways. The Federation urges that decisions in this regard be guided by the public-service character of Indian Railways, operational safety, institutional capability and the legitimate interests of Railway employees, rather than by considerations of short-term cost reduction alone.

9. Pension and retirement benefits:

The Federation requests that the Government safeguard the legitimate pensionary and retirement-related interests of Railway employees covered under different pension schemes. Pension and retirement benefits constitute an essential element of social security for employees who have devoted their working lives to public service. Issues affecting pension, retirement benefits require a fair and considered resolution.

Hon'ble Sir, Indian Railways is a vital national transport carrier, and its safe, reliable and efficient functioning depends substantially on the commitment and performance of its employees. However, the persistent shortage of staff, restrictions on creation of posts despite increased workload, arbitrary surrender of posts and decisions taken without adequate consultations are creating a situation in which the burden on the existing workforce is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain.

The Federation firmly believes that employee welfare, operational safety and the efficiency of Indian Railways cannot be secured through continuous pressure on an understaffed workforce. Nor can healthy industrial relations be maintained when established consultative arrangements are bypassed on matters directly affecting employees. A constructive and timely response to these concerns is therefore essential to prevent further deterioration in employee morale and industrial relations.

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In view of the foregoing, NFIR earnestly requests your kind intervention and solicits appropriate directions to the Ministry of Railways and the Ministry of Finance on the above matters.

The Federation trusts that your personal intervention will help secure a constructive resolution of these issues, restore confidence in the consultative machinery and ensure that the interests of Railway employees, the safety of operations and the long-term strength of Indian Railways receive the attention they deserve.

Yours faithfully

(Dr. M. Raghavaiah)
General Secretary &
Leader/JCM (Staff Side)

Copy forwarded to the Hon'ble Minister of Finance, Government of India, New Delhi for necessary action please.
Copy forwarded to the Hon'ble Minister for Railways, Government of India, New Delhi for necessary action please.
Copy forwarded to the Cabinet Secretary, Government of India, New Delhi for necessary action please.
Copy forwarded to the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Railway Board, New Delhi for necessary action please.
Copy to the General Secretaries of Affiliated Unions of NFIR.
File No. NFIR/WCM/244.