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**All India Railwaymen's Federation**  
(Estd, 1924)

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No.AIRF/GMs' Conference

Dated: January 12, 2012

The General Secretaries,  
All Affiliated Unions,

Dear Coms.,

**Sub: Feedback on General Managers' Conference held on 11-12 January, 2012**

General Managers' Conference was held in Rail Bhawan, New Delhi on 11-12 January, 2012, in the backdrop of accident of Brahmaputra Mail that took place at Karonpuroto Station in Barharwa-Sahebgunj Section of Eastern Railway, wherein four passengers were dead while nine were injured. A goods train had also derailed at Khagaria(East Central Railway) just before this accident.

The conference started with the address of the Hon'ble Minister for Railways who, in his speech, express serious anguish on such avoidable accidents and asked to go into the root cause of the same as well as to discuss safety issues on top priority to find a solution for avoiding such accidents in future.

He, however, appreciated the work being done by the Railwaymen and stated that the Indian Railways is the most robust, cheapest and the best transport system in the world. He further added that we have best industrial relations, but such accidents reveal that the basic field work is not being done properly and there is no accountability for such accidents. The Hon'ble Minister for Railways opined that problem can be at any level, but its solution must be there and further stated that the training system definitely seems to be faulty.

He stated that he does not want to demoralize the system and this is high time to wake-up.

The Hon'ble Minister for Railways stressed that the Indian economy cannot grow without the Indian Railways and for that Indian Railways have to develop. He further stated that this conference must have a brainstorming session to find out a solution for safe running of the trains.

**Shri K.H. Munniyappa**, Hon'ble Minister of State for Railways, also addressed the conference and stated that there is pressing need for decentralization and delegation of powers down the line because the powers being centralized at the higher level, every important decision is unnecessary delayed and the system suffers a lot on this account including preventive maintenance. He further stated that the quality of work cannot improve till we will remain in the habit of accepting lower standard.

**Member Mechanical**, Railway Board, opined that there is some dilution in the training of the Loco Crew. He stated that there can be rail fracture because of bad condition of rolling stock also. He was of the firm opinion that the IRCA, a natural organization, must be re-organized properly to ensure safe rail operation.

**Member Staff**, Railway Board, stated that he is ready to amend/modify the recruitment and training policy to suit the organization.

**Member Engineering**, Railway Board, stated that out of 105 reported train accidents, 25 are on engineering account, out of which 45% are due to rail/weld fracture. He, therefore, opined that there is an absolutely urgent need of cold weather patrolling, night inspections by the officers and supervisors. He further opined that overloading must be checked, which is also one of the cause of rail fracture. He also stated that monthly route-wise plan must be prioritized for maintenance.

**Member Electrical and Member Traffic**, Railway Board, also talked about improvement in safety, audit and maintenance and operations.

**Financial Commissioner**(Railways) was critic of bad financial condition of the Railways.

**Chairman**, Railway Board, mentioned that proper procedures of operation and maintenance are not being followed and safety meetings at the DRMs level are not being done. Of late, inspection and training are also being diluted.

### **General Secretary AIRF**

Speaking on the occasion, I once again touched all the points, which I presented before the High Level Safety Review Committee, and some of the points raised are appended below for your better appreciation.

- Large number of vacancies - more than 1,50,000 - in safety categories belonging to Running, Operating and Maintenance Cadre. Even Leave Reserve, Rest Giver and Trainee Reserves are not available.
- Infrastructure is being developed and new trains being introduced, without additional proper manpower.
- Indiscriminate surrender of posts on thumb-rule principle is counter-productive for an organization like Railways.
- Inadequacy of funds for replacement/renewal and maintenance of rolling stock, track and signalling.
- Inadequate facilities of training and that too without motivation to the trainees as well as trainers.
- New technology is being adopted without any arrangement for proper training of the staff.
- There are inadequate research facilities.
- Material/equipment failure is attributed to Human Failure – life cycle principle has not been fixed. The process of procurement being age old and traditional, the material input, even for safety components, is delayed inordinately as also quality of procurement is not maintained because of lowest rate concept of the tenders.
- Running Staff must be provided with electronic safety backup, so that in case of any failure, trains may stop to avert accidents.


- Excessive stress on Railway employees on account of overburdening of workload.
- Long duty hours of the staff, particularly Running Staff, Trains Controllers, S&T Staff, Track Maintenance Staff, Elect. And Mechanical, Shed and open line staff, Traffic and Operation Staff etc.
- Breach of rest of the Running Staff due to (i) shortage of manpower and, (ii) Inadequate Running Rooms facilities.
- Inadequate blocks for track maintenance due to over capacity utilization of routes.
- Fear psychosis – Minimum punishment, removal from service, particularly in case of passing signal at danger(SPADE). Long pendency of Discipline & Appeal cases also cause stress.
- Manning of unmanned level crossing.
- Assault on the Railwaymen, particularly on manned level crossings.
- Dying of staff on duty, particularly running-over of thousands of Trackmen.
- Recruitment of wards of the Railwaymen(recommendations of many Safety Committees and Commission's reports).
- Unauthorized encroachment on railway land near railway tracks.
- The condition of the Railway quarters and colonies is not conducive for proper rest in case of Running Staff and the staff engaged in maintenance of rolling stock, tracks and signalling.
- No proper counseling and inspection.
- Decision making process being extremely slow, sometimes it becomes irrelevant and out of context.
- Lack of proper mechanism for timely redressing staff grievances even at the lowest level adds to working with strain and stress, particularly by the staff of safety categories.
- No proper mechanism for motivation of railway staff and inadequate promotional prospects.

Apart from the above, I further mentioned that the Railway employees are feeling de-motivated and demoralized because of their long pending demands not being met. Report of the Joint Committee on Trackmen is wandering in the corridor of the Rail Bhawan without its implementation even after than 10 months of its submission. Similarly, unanimous recommendations of the Departmental Anomaly Committee are not being implemented, with the result that Running Staff are not getting Additional Pay, arrears of Running Allowance w.e.f. 1.1.2006, improved ALK(25%) and also their grade pay has not been changed. Supervisors of apex group 'C' are not getting GP of Rs.4800, ASMs are not getting GP Rs.4200, Cadre Restructuring Exercise has come to standstill, New Pension Scheme is creating lot of problems among the staff recruited on or after 1.1.2004. Non-filling up of more than 2.5 lakh vacancies is a potential danger for the safety of the Railways because the staff is over-burdened and over-stressed. The conditions of the Running Rooms are very bad, neither the staff are getting proper rest in the Running Rooms nor at home. Though in the LARSGESS, educational qualification has been relaxed and PET has been removed, but still written examinations has not been dispensed with. The condition of the Railway Colonies is very bad.

Erroneous orders for the recruitment of Substitutes have not been withdrawn and nothing is being done for the recruitment of the wards of the Railway employees as Substitute. Due to financial crisis, development of infrastructure has come to a standstill. Participative discussions through POM/DOM, meetings of the Safety and Running Rooms Committees, MPP, Training Manager's, Labour Advisory Committee have come to a grinding halt. All the pronouncements made by the then Hon'ble Minister for Railways, Ms Mamata Banerjee, in her Rail Budget, viz. **opening of Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalayas, Nursing Colleges, Medical Colleges, Engineering Colleges, ITIs/Polytechnics, "House for All", Mobile Medical Vans**, are unaddressed.

We are quite concerned for the passengers dying during the course of accident, but we are equally concerned over the staff dying on duty. Hundreds of Trackmen, Cabinmen, Shunting Staff, Loco & Traffic Running Staff have lost their lives throughout the year and we are unable to protect them. With all these problems, we are the part of the Railways and still every Railwaymen wish that there should not be any accident and the Railways should run safely. We are extending fullest cooperation in running the Railway System smoothly, but at the same time also hope a fair-deal to the Railwaymen, so that they should stand motivated.

Comradely yours,



(Shiva Gopal Mishra)

