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All India Railwaymen's Federation
(Estd, 1924)

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D.O.No.AIRF/52(ii)

Dated: December 28, 2011

Dear Shri Mishra Ji,

Sub: Problems of Track Machine Staff

You may recall that an **All India Safety Seminar-Cum-Conference of Track Machine Staff** was held in T.N. Bajpai Memorial Hall, Chelmsford Road, New Delhi, which was inaugurated by your good-self. It may also be appreciated that the Track Machine Organization is growing fast, nevertheless the things have not so far been systemized despite lapse of several years, because of which a number of long pending grievances of these staff still remain unresolved.

I would, therefore, like to draw your kind attention towards a few being appended below:-

1. Classification of Track Machine Staff as Safety Category Staff

The staff working in different grades with GP Rs.1800, 1900, 2400, 2800 and 4200, deployed on Track Machines, have not unfortunately been classified as **Safety Staff** while they undertake the most safety related works of track renewal and maintenance with Track Machines and other tools and plants. AIRF has repeatedly raised this issue at different levels, but the Railway Board are yet to issue instructions in this regard, on account of which these staff, who are totally involved in railway safety, are deprived of the associated benefits of the staff categorized as Safety Staff.

I would, therefore, seek your personal intervention for early settlement of this issue.

2. Administrative control of Track Machine Staff

It is though very clearly laid down in the Indian Railway Track Machine Manual that the control of the staff working on Track Machines on zonal railways should be centrally controlled on zonal basis as a separate Track Machine Organization. But it is noticed that on some of the zonal railways, these staff have been de-centralized on divisional basis. It is pertinent to mention here that the Track Machines of different categories keep on shifting from one division to another for undertaking the work of track renewal/maintenance on need basis, with the result, that the staff deployed on these machines also keep on moving from one division to another on zonal railway basis. Therefore, in case, the staff is kept divisionally controlled, a lot of problems crop up, viz. maintenance of their service record, leave account, PF etc. unnecessarily and sometimes difficulties are faced while arranging payment of settlement dues on superannuation/pre-mature demise.

Keeping this aspect in view, Railway Board should issue instructions to all the zonal railways to follow uniform policy of centrally controlled system as a separate organization for Track Machine Staff on all zonal railways

3. Implementation of 21 days duty and 7 days rest in a month duty roster for Track Machine Organization Staff

A High Power Committee, constituted by the Railway Board to study the various problems of the Track Machine Organization and to suggest remedial measures thereof, had recommended 21 days duty, followed by 7 days rest in a month for the staff of Track Machine Organization so as to facilitate them to meet their family and social obligations because they often remain away from their residences. While some of the zonal railways have taken initiatives to implement this roster, which is quite convenient both for the administration and the staff, however, a number of zonal railways are still dragging their feet in implementing the same, which is quite unfortunate. It has also been laid down in the recommendations of the said committee to create 25% additional posts of different categories in Track Machine Organization to effectively implement this roster, the zonal railways have been facing lot of difficulties in creation of these additional posts due to embargo of matching surrender.

I would, therefore, request you to kindly get the creation of 25% additional posts required for implementing 21 days duty roster, de-link from matching surrender process and issue instructions to all the zonal railways to implement above mentioned roster on all the zonal railways uniformly.

4. Deployment of Driver/Pilot on Track Machine

At present, the SSEs/JEs(Track Machine) have been entrusted multiple duties, which include supervision of works, driving of Track Machines at a speed of 60 kmph as permitted by RDSO, operation of machines, store management and maintenance of machines etc. there have been a number of occasions when these SSEs/JEs have been penalized with stiff Major Penalty on committing error/omission while driving Track Machines from one station to another because of lack of GSR and STR Rules of the concerned section. Cases have also occurred where some of them have lost their lives too. Since Track Machines keep on shifting from one station to another and one division to another in a zonal railway, and there is no provision of route learning for them unlike Loco Pilots, as also they are not provided with any Pilot, Driver etc. while driving machines on some known sections, there are ample chances of committing mistake leading to accident.

I would, therefore, request you to either deploy some Loco Pilots to drive Track Machine or OHE/TRD pattern should also be adopted in Track Machine Organization also.

5. Provision of special incentive for Track Machine staff

Earlier, we had raised the demand for provision of Running Allowance to Track Machine Staff, which was not exceeded to, and instead a committee of 3 SAG officers was constituted to examine the probability of some special incentive for them. This issue is, however, hanging fire for quite some time and creating discontentment among the staff of Track Machine Organization.

You are, therefore, requested to get this case expedited so that the staff could get some monetary benefits in the name of Special Incentive.

6. Provision of proper camp coaches and resting facilities to Track Machine Staff

While there is an established provision in the IRTMM of a well furnished camp coach having adequate facilities as per RDSO's guidelines with the Track Machines, but practically it is seen that the camp coaches provided with the machines are in a very critical condition being age old and

some of them have already expired their codal life, as such the same are neither suitable for proper resting facilities nor safe in operation. Likewise, proper rest houses have also not been provided at the identified camping stations for the Track Machine Staff, with the result that, they do not get proper rest after performing their duties because of being away from their Headquarters and residence.

Necessary steps are, therefore, required to be taken to ensure provision of properly furnished and safe camp coaches as well as rest houses at identified camping stations so as to facilitate proper rest to these staff.

7. Provision of Cook in PB-I GP Rs.1900 on camp coaches of Track Machines

Railway Board have already sanctioned ex-cadre post of Cook in erstwhile grade Rs.800-1150 for camp coaches of Track Machines on the Indian Railways basis to provide cooking facilities for the staff deployed on Track Machines. Since the Cook in Catering services are already placed in PB-I with GP Rs.1900, as such the Cooks working on ex-cadre posts on the camp coaches of the Track Machines may also be given Grade Pay of Rs.1900 uniformly as an incentive and motivation to work on these Track Machines.

8. Provision of uniform to Track Machine Staff

While Trackmen and other allied staff of Engineering Department is entitled for steel toe shoes, fluorescent jacket, gloves, protective clothing and proper uniform, however, the staff working on Track Machines are not extended this facility.

It would, therefore, be quite appropriate that the staff of Track Machines are also provided with proper uniform, steel toe shoes, fluorescent jacket, hand gloves, protective clothing, air protector and helmet etc. keeping in view their hazardous nature of duty.

9. Provision of shelter and proper siding for placement of Track Machines and camp coaches

The Track Machines and camp coaches are often placed not only on improper locations but some times these machines and camp coaches are placed on such a place which lacks basic facilities of drinking water, lighting etc. and at times placed in between two running lines, which result in avoidable accidents etc. leading to loss of their lives.

I would, therefore, request that proper nominated non-OHE sidings be allotted for stabling Track Machines and camp coaches with provision of shelters for the safety of costly Track Machines.

I would be highly thankful if you may kindly take early steps for resolving above problems of the Track Machines Staff who are rendering valuable services in track maintenance over the Indian Railways.

With kind regards!.

Yours sincerely,

Shri A.P. Mishra,
Member Engineering,
Railway Board,
New Delhi

(Shiva Goal Mishra)

The Chairman,
Railway Board,
New Delhi

Dear Sir,

Sub: Non-settlement of long pending of the Railwaymen

The inordinate delay in resolving the undernoted long pending major demands of the Railwaymen, deep sense of frustration is generating among them.

- (i) **Grievances of the Running Staff** - Issues relating to Running Staff, i.e. payment of arrears of Running Allowance w.e.f. 1.1.2006, improvement in the rate of Mileage/ALK, 25% increase in the rate of Mileage due to enhancement in DA(beyond 50%), Additional Allowance, etc. etc. are not being resolved despite sustained persuasions by the AIRF.
- (ii) **Removal of Departmental Anomalies** – Departmental Anomalies were unanimously agreed by the Railway Board, and the same were referred to the MoF by the Railway Ministry, but unfortunately the same are still hanging fire without any fruitful outcome, as such need to be addressed early.
- (iii) **Recruitment of Substitutes in the Railways** – One of the long pending demands of AIRF is that, the wards of the Railwaymen should be recruited as “**Substitutes**” in the Railways. Unfortunately, orders to this effect issued by the Railway Board were so complicated that the same could not be implemented by the General Managers of the Indian Railways and could not get real shape, on the contrary invited certain litigations as well. It is requested that the said orders issued by the Railway Board should be suitably amended so that wards of the Railwaymen are given priority while recruiting “**Substitute**” in the Railways.
- (iv) **Absorption of quasi-administrative offices staff in the Railways** - The issue of absorption of quasi-administrative offices staff in the Railways was raised by the AIRF several times in various negotiating Fora with the Railway Board but unfortunately nothing has been done in the matter. If these staff are absorbed in the Railways, this will enable the Railways in having trained manpower.
- (v) **Implementation of various Welfare Schemes announced by earlier Hon'ble MR in her Rail Budget** – Ms Mamata Banerjee, Ex. Hon'ble Minister for Railways, in her last Rail Budget had announced various Welfare Schemes for Railway employees and their wards, such as **opening of Nursing Schools, Medical Colleges, Engineering Colleges, Polytechnics, Kendriya Vidyalas, houses for all the Railway employees, extension of medical facilities to both dependent father and mother of railway employees, setting up of a Railway Vidyalaya Prabandhan Board to improve the quality of education to children studying in Railway Schools.** The progress on these Welfare Scheme is very tardy and to create confidence among the Railwaymen, the process of implementation of such welfare schemes should be accelerated.

- (vi) **Provision of Privilege Pass facility for the parents of Railway employees** – At present, Indian Railways give Privilege Pass facility only to the widow mother of the Railway employees. This facility should be extended to the parents of Railway employees in line with PSUs, such as Air India, who offers this facility even to blood relations of the employees.
- (vii) Implementation of recommendations of Group `D` Staff Promotion Committee
- (viii) Addition in Safety Categories for the purpose of LARSGESS
- (ix) Extension of the scope of the LARSGESS to higher grade Safety Category posts and other categories
- (x) Upgradation of 15% apex level group `C` posts to group `B` posts
- (xi) Daily Allowance to Staff Car Drivers
- (xii) Payment of Washing Allowance to all those staff who are getting uniforms
- (xiii) Transport Allowance to the staff of Rayanapadu and Jamalpur Workshops
- (xiv) Reimbursement of medical expenses and Children Education Allowance/Hostel Subsidy etc. and Transport Allowance.
- (xv) Maintenance of Railway colonies and quarters.
- (xvi) Improvement in the condition of Running Rooms
- (xvii) 30% Training Allowance to the Trainers/Instructors
- (xviii) Repatriation and Cadre Restructuring of the staff who are on deemed deputation in IRCTC to Railway Catering Units
- (xix) Regularization of Casual Labours waiting in the Live Register
- (xx) Splitting of grade pay for the purpose of cadre restructuring

It appears that there is no proper seriousness in the Railway Board on these long pending major issues. AIRF, therefore, feels that it will be quite appropriate, if these issues raised by the Staff Side are resolved within a reasonable time frame, else inordinate delay on these issues shall result in avoidable discontentment and frustration among the Railwaymen.

It is hoped that the patience of the Staff Side and the sentiments shall be duly acknowledged by the Official Side(Railway Board) and a proper methodology shall be evolved to resolve these issues at the earliest to avoid unnecessary confrontation and industrial unrest.

We hope, this will be taken in right perspective and needful shall be done as early as possible.

With kind regards!

Yours faithfully,

(Shiva Gopal Mishra)
General Secretary

Copy to: Member Staff, Railway Board, New Delhi – for necessary action please.

Copy to: Addl. Member Staff, Railway Board, New Delhi – for necessary action please.

Copy to: Adviser(IR), Railway Board, New Delhi – for necessary action please.

Copy to: EDPC-I, Railway Board, New Delhi – for necessary action please.

Copy to: GSs, all affiliated unions – for information.