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All India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF)

# All India Railwaymen's Federation

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4, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055 (INDIA)

No. AIRF/159 (29)

Dated 22.06.2026

The Chairman & CEO,  
Railway Board,  
Rail Bhawan,  
New Delhi.

**Sub: Rationalization of Manpower for FY 2026-27 – Serious concerns regarding fixation of manpower surrender targets and KPI-linked implementation.**

Ref: 1. AIRF letters No. AIRF/159 dated 27.04.2026 and 11.05.2026.  
2. Railway Board's letter No. E(MPP)2025/1/9 dated 16.06.2026.

Dear Sir,

The All India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF) once again seeks your kind and urgent intervention in a matter having far-reaching implications on the workforce strength, operational efficiency, safety standards, and industrial relations climate on Indian Railways.

The issue relates to the continuing policy of manpower rationalization involving redistribution and surrender of posts under the Manpower Planning (MPP) exercise for FY 2026-27, particularly in pursuance of Railway Board's instructions dated 24.04.2026 and the subsequent clarification issued vide Railway Board's letter dated 16.06.2026.

At the outset, it may be stated that the Railway Board has prescribed zone-wise manpower rationalization targets equivalent to 2% of the sanctioned strength and has further linked the achievement of these targets with the performance assessment of officers through the Key Performance Indicator (KPI)/MoU mechanism. This approach, in the considered opinion of this Federation, is fundamentally inconsistent with established manpower planning principles and is likely to result in indiscriminate reduction of sanctioned strength without due regard to actual functional requirements.

It is pertinent to mention that AIRF had earlier conveyed its strong reservations on similar proposals vide its communications dated 19.03.2025 and subsequent representations. However, despite repeated objections raised by the Federation through various forums including PNM and DC/JCM meetings, the policy of surrendering posts continues unabated.

The Federation's concerns are reiterated as under:

**1. Violation of Established Codal Provisions:** The Indian Railway Establishment Manual (IREM) envisages that creation, continuation, redistribution, and surrender of posts shall be based upon functional necessity, workload assessment, traffic requirements, safety considerations, and administrative justification. Prescribing a uniform target of manpower reduction across all Railways and Production Units, irrespective of local conditions and operational realities, is contrary to these established principles and undermines the scientific basis of manpower planning.

**2. Misapplication of KPI-Based Performance Assessment:** The linking of manpower surrender targets with the KPI framework amounts to converting staff reduction into a performance parameter. KPIs are intended to measure efficiency, productivity, service delivery, safety, and organizational effectiveness. Their use as an instrument to enforce manpower reduction creates undue administrative pressure and encourages mechanical compliance rather than objective assessment of actual manpower requirements.

Such an approach is neither supported by codal provisions nor consistent with sound human resource management practices.

**3. Arbitrary and Non-Functional Target Setting:** The prescribed targets are numerical in nature and appear to have been fixed without undertaking any comprehensive assessment of workload, asset growth, traffic expansion, safety obligations, or category-wise manpower requirements.

Manpower planning cannot be reduced to a mathematical exercise. It must be based on operational realities and future requirements rather than predetermined surrender targets.

**4. Adverse Impact on Construction Organisations:** In Construction Organisations, posts are generally estimate-linked and work-charged in nature. Such posts are sanctioned against approved projects and cannot be surrendered independently unless the corresponding work itself is curtailed, modified, or closed.

Enforcement of surrender targets in these organizations, without corresponding revision of sanctioned estimates and project requirements, is contrary to established financial, engineering, and accounting principles and may adversely affect timely execution of infrastructure projects.

**5. Circumvention of Established Consultative Machinery:** The Federation is constrained to observe that such a significant policy decision affecting thousands of employees has been implemented without meaningful consultation with recognized Federations and Unions.

This approach runs contrary to the spirit of participative management embodied in the JCM and PNM machinery and weakens the long-established tradition of harmonious industrial relations on Indian Railways.

**6. Serious Implications for Safety, Productivity and Employee Welfare:**

The inevitable consequences of target-driven manpower reduction are likely to include:

- Increased workload on existing staff.
- Higher levels of physical fatigue and mental stress.
- Deterioration in working conditions.
- Delays in maintenance and operational activities.
- Reduced efficiency in service delivery.
- Increased risk to safety-sensitive operations.

Indian Railways is a safety-critical organization where human resources constitute one of the most important pillars of safe train operations. Any policy that indirectly incentivizes reduction of manpower without corresponding reduction in workload warrants careful reconsideration.

**7. Contradiction Between Expansion of Assets and Reduction of Manpower:** It is difficult to reconcile the policy of manpower reduction with the unprecedented expansion and modernization presently taking place on Indian Railways.

Over the past few years, Indian Railways has witnessed:

- Extensive doubling, tripling and quadrupling of lines.
- Commissioning of new routes and sections.
- Introduction of Vande Bharat and other semi-high-speed services.
- Expansion of freight corridors and terminals.
- Electrification of routes on a large scale.
- Introduction of new technologies and maintenance systems.
- Growth in passenger and freight operations.

Each of these developments generates additional responsibilities, maintenance requirements, monitoring functions, and safety obligations. Under such circumstances, continued surrender of posts creates a mismatch between assets and manpower, thereby placing excessive pressure on the existing workforce.

**8. Growing Vacancies and Shrinking Workforce:** The Federation has repeatedly highlighted that a large number of vacancies already exist across various departments and categories. Instead of focusing on expeditious filling of these vacancies, the continued policy of surrendering posts further reduces the sanctioned strength and aggravates manpower shortages.

This trend is likely to have long-term adverse implications for organizational efficiency and succession planning.

**9. Concerns Regarding Railway Board's Clarification Dated 16.06.2026:**

The Railway Board has clarified that the focus of the present exercise is on redistribution and that there is no reduction in sanctioned strength where redistribution is undertaken.

While the Federation appreciates the stated objective of redeploying manpower to critical and safety categories, the practical position on the ground presents a different picture.

**In numerous cases, redistribution has effectively resulted in reduction of sanctioned strength in the categories and units from which posts are withdrawn, without comprehensive consultation with recognized unions and without adequately assessing the impact on the functioning of the affected cadre.**

**Further, posts required for operation and maintenance of newly introduced assets and services are increasingly being sourced through redistribution from existing establishments rather than through creation of fresh posts. Consequently, one category is strengthened at the cost of another, leading to shortages and discontent in the donor categories.**

**The Federation is therefore constrained to submit that the distinction between redistribution and reduction becomes largely academic when the functional requirements of the originating cadre are not simultaneously reviewed and protected.**

**10. Magnitude of the Proposed Reduction:** As per the annexure to Railway Board's instructions dated 24.04.2026, a target involving rationalization of 29,608 posts across Indian Railways, including 1,908 posts in South Central Railway alone, has been prescribed.

The sheer magnitude of this exercise raises legitimate concerns regarding its impact on operational efficiency, employee morale, maintenance standards, project execution, and safety performance.

The Federation has consistently maintained before various forums, including PNM Item Nos. 57/2018 and 24/2023, that manpower surrender cannot be regarded as a measure of efficiency. On the contrary, manpower availability must be aligned with workload, asset growth, technological requirements, and safety obligations.

The Federation has also consistently advocated that creation of posts should accompany expansion of infrastructure and introduction of new assets so that the burden is not transferred to the existing workforce.

**In view of the foregoing, AIRF firmly reiterates that:**

- a) **Manpower surrender cannot be treated as a performance achievement nor be linked with KPI-based assessment.**
- b) **Uniform reduction targets are incompatible with scientific manpower planning.**
- c) **Any policy resulting in forced or indiscriminate reduction of manpower will adversely affect operational efficiency, employee welfare, and safety standards.**
- d) **Redistribution of posts should not become a substitute for creation of posts required for new assets and expanding operations.**

**Accordingly, AIRF most earnestly requests the Railway Board to:**

- 1. Review and withdraw the KPI-linked manpower rationalization targets.**
- 2. Reconsider and withdraw the prescribed surrender targets for FY 2026-27.**

3. Ensure strict adherence to workload-based and rule-compliant manpower planning.
4. Undertake a comprehensive manpower assessment in consultation with recognized Federations and Unions.
5. Create and fill posts commensurate with the expansion of assets, services, and operational requirements.
6. Ensure that safety, maintenance, and operational categories are not adversely affected by arbitrary redistribution or surrender of posts.
7. Restore confidence among the workforce by adopting a transparent, consultative, and evidence-based approach to manpower management.

The issue is of immense importance to the entire railway workforce and has significant implications for safety, efficiency, productivity, and industrial harmony. AIRF, therefore, solicits your personal intervention for a comprehensive review of the policy and for taking corrective measures in the larger interest of Indian Railways.

An early and favourable decision in the matter will go a long way in addressing the genuine apprehensions of railway employees and reinforcing confidence in the Railway Administration's commitment towards safe, efficient, and employee-centric railway operations.

Yours sincerely,



(Shiva Gopal Mishra)  
General Secretary



Copy to: General Secretaries, All Affiliated Unions of AIRF - for information.