Dear Comrades,

I wish to bring certain important facts to your attention.

The AILRSA, Southern Railway, and its members took a firm decision to claim and avail themselves of 16 hours of HQ rest + 30 hours of Periodic Rest (PR) with effect from 1st June 2024.

Around 1,500 Loco Pilots (LPs) and Assistant Loco Pilots (ALPs) forcefully exercised their right to 16+30 hours of rest by absenting themselves from duty during the period from 1st June to 28th June 2024, in a manner similar to participating in a strike.

As a consequence, around 800 LPs/ALPs faced disciplinary action, including suspension, transfers to other lobbies, and punishments ranging from reduction of pay by one stage for 36 months to withholding of Privilege Passes.

They bravely faced this harassment and accepted the punishments as a badge of honour in their fight to establish their right to 16+30 hours of rest.

Amid this ongoing struggle, the Railway Administration realised its mistake. The notified ALP vacancies under RRB CEN 01/2024 were increased from 5,800 to 18,000, adding a massive 13,000 vacancies. Furthermore, orders were issued to initiate annual recruitment through the Railway Recruitment Boards (RRBs).

Consequently, subsequent ALP recruitment notifications were issued in 2025 and 2026 under CEN 01/2025 and CEN 01/2026, respectively.

In CEN 01/2026, the notified ALP vacancies stood at 11,127. On 10.11.2026, these vacancies were further increased to 14,627, adding approximately 3,500 more posts.

The 28-day struggle, from 1st June to 28th June 2024, during which running staff forcefully availed themselves of 16+30 hours of rest by staying away from duty, along with solidarity demonstrations across other Zonal Railways, played a significant role in bringing attention to our grievances.

The intervention of the Leader of Opposition, Shri Rahul Gandhi, and the timely intervention of Shri John Brittas, MP, along with 13 other MPs belonging to various political parties, were also crucial. They met the Railway Minister

on 28th June 2024 and explained the core issues underlying our grievances regarding Periodic Rest.

These collective efforts paved the way for decisions to recruit sufficient running staff to ease the burden on Loco Running Staff, who are routinely denied proper weekly rest, leave, and medical leave and are subjected to unlimited duty hours, particularly in goods train operations.

As a result of these struggles, several improvements were also made:

- Air-conditioning facilities were provided in running rooms and locomotive cabs.

- At least the meagre 30 hours of Periodic Rest (PR) was ordered to be granted regularly to running staff.

A simple 28-day struggle by the running staff of one Zonal Railway brought about these significant changes.

Just imagine what improvements in our working conditions could be achieved if similar struggles were organised simultaneously across all Zonal Railways!

The outcome of such a united struggle could be:

1. Proper Weekly Rest:

16 hours of HQ rest combined with 30 hours of Periodic Rest, making a total of 46 hours of continuous rest.

2. Reduction in Continuous Night Duties:

Continuous night duties could be reduced from four to two.

3. Timely Return Home:

Running staff could return home within 36 hours of being away from headquarters.

4. Restriction on Continuous Duty Hours:

Continuous duty hours could be restricted to 8 hours for goods trains and 6 hours for passenger and coaching trains.

5. Adequate Leave Availability:

Restrictions on granting leave could be eased through the recruitment of additional ALPs and LPs.

However, struggles are never without challenges. They invariably demand that we courageously face retaliation in the form of suspension, transfers, reduction in rank, and pay reductions.

Nevertheless, we have the strength to build a new era in Indian Railways, where running staff can work with dignity, enjoy their rightful rest, and lead a decent family life.

Be prepared to fight for and secure our Five-Point Charter of Demands from 10th December 2026.

We must take a firm and collective decision at the CWC meeting to be held at Agra in November 2026.

With Red Salute!

L. Mony