

**The Chairman,
Railway Board,
New Delhi.**

Sir,

Sub: Meeting of the Governing Council of FROA with the full Board.

The recommendations of the 6th Central Pay Commission have been accepted by the Central Government with certain modifications and have been given effect from 1.9.2008. However, Ministry of Railways is yet to implement certain decisions of the Central Government which have been implemented by the other Ministries and Departments. This has led to discontentment amongst Railway officers. Therefore, FROA requests for a meeting of its Governing Council with the full Board to present these demands. FROA also requests Board's attention on few other issues which are also agitating the Railway officers. A list of issues which will be taken up during the meeting of FROA with the full Board are given below with brief notes.

(A) **Issues linked with the report of 6th Central Pay Commission:**

1. **Cadre Review:**

1.1 While accepting the report of 6th Central Pay commission, the Central Government vide Resolution No.1/1/2008-IC dated 20.9.2008, para 1(ix) has decided that cadre review for Central Group 'A' Services will be brought up-to-date in a year. There has been no progress in review of cadres of Group 'A' Railway Services so far. The prolonged stagnation of officers of various services in SAG and Selection Grade is having a demoralizing effect on them.

1.2 With significant upgradation of various equivalent posts in other Central Group 'A' Services, the Railway Services have progressively become disadvantaged. For example, the posts of DGP and PCCFs in States and members of CBDT and CBEC were at par with the posts of GMs. But these posts have now been upgraded to the Apex Level Rs.80,000 fixed. Consequently there has been significant upgradation in lower posts in police, forest and revenue services.

1.3 Due to delay in cadre review, there is also a great amount of disparity among the different Railway services. This disparity may be brought down by appropriate distribution of ex-cadre posts and creation of worked charged posts.

1.4 FROA also demands that while undertaking the cadre review the Ministry of Railways should also propose review appropriate upgradation of ex-cadre and general category posts such as ADRM, DRM, SDGM, AGM and GM.

2. Disparity with IAS officers:

Accepting the recommendation the 6th Pay Commission the Central Government has also decided that “Whenever any IAS officer of a particular batch is posted in the Centre to a particular grade carrying a specific grade pay in pay bands PB-3 or PB-4, grant of higher pay scale on non-functional basis to the officers belonging to batches of organized Group A services that are senior by two years or more should be given by the government”. The Ministry of Railways is yet to notify and implement this decision for Railway services.

3. Accommodation in hotel while on duty:

Ministry of Finance has notified revised traveling allowance rules vide OM No.19030/3/2008–E.IV dated 23.9.2008. Vide these orders, officers of the Central Government have been entitled for reimbursement for hotel accommodation as per their grade pay. No equivalent order has yet been issued by the Ministry of Railways. The Railway Board’s order to double the traveling allowance rates is not at all equivalent to the traveling entitlement accepted by the Central Government and notified by the Ministry of Finance for Government Officers. Therefore, Railway Board may issue necessary orders to allow the Railway officers to avail hotel accommodation while on duty and when Rest House accommodation cannot be provided. The officers under go untold misery while going on duty, particularly, in metropolitan cities. The problem is the most acute in Delhi. Board may also like to make contractual arrangement with certain hotel chains like Ginger Yatri Niwas etc. to provide accommodation to Railway officers proceeding on duty.

4. **Travel facility by air:**

As per the Ministry of Finance's above notification, officers in the rank of SOs & PSs drawing grade pay Rs.5400/- and above have been entitled to undertake journey by air. However, air journey by Railways officers is extremely restrictive by internal instructions. These are required to be liberalized significantly. SAG/SG officers should be allowed to avail air journey while attending duty outside their respective zonal Railways. The need for finance concurrence for approval of air journey of SAG/SG officers also need to be dispensed with.

5. **Travel entitlement by train:**

5.1 As per the notification of the Ministry of Finance, JAG officers are entitled to travel by AC first class by train on duty. This entitlement is now denied to the JAG officers of the Railways which should be amended.

5.2 Journey in Rajdhani Express is further restricted even on duty pass. The current restrictive policy of quotas in Rajdhani Express and Shatabdi Express trains should be withdrawn and Railway officers on duty should be allotted berths in Rajdhani/Shatabdi Express from the general quota.

5.3 Journey by Rajdhani Express on privilege pass is further restricted. Officers of grade pay Rs.7600/- and above, who are entitled to travel by first class AC on duty, should be allowed to avail first class AC on privilege/post-retirement pass upto two berths in Rajdhani Express on payment of 1/3 difference between first AC and second AC. Similar relaxation should also be made for journey by Shatabdi Express.

5.4 At present, retired GMs and AMs are entitled travel by Ist AC on post retirement passes and their spouses have to pay 1/3rd of the difference between AC and first class for journey by Ist AC. Through monetary burden on this account is small it is a cause of great inconvenience to retired senior officers. Board are requested to permit an entitlement of 2 berths in first AC for retired GMs/AMs.

6. **Transport Allowance:**

6.1 Earlier the transport allowance was fully exempted from income tax. Although the transport allowance has been revised, the exemption limit remains upto Rs.800/- per month and the extra amount is being added to the income of the officers. FROA requests Board to make a reference to CBDT for revision of the exemption limit in transport allowance.

6.2 FROA thanks Board for making improved and liberalized scheme of hired vehicles to Railway officers under contractual arrangement. This facility, however, needs to be extended to Doctors in SA Grade. Selection Grade officers in Railway headquarters and Railway Board also need to be provided with independent vehicles.

6.3 Board are also requested to make of reference for air conditioning of staff cars to Ministry of Finance. At present AGMs, DRMs and other senior officers are greatly inconvenienced due to ban on air conditioning of staff cars. These outdated instructions need review.

7. **Reimbursement of magazines and news papers:**

The Central Government has accepted the recommendation of the Central Pay Commission (Para 4.2.81) for doubling of the various miscellaneous allowances specific to different Ministries/Departments. The reimbursement entitlement for magazines and news papers have not been revised by Railway Board for the last 15 years. This reimbursement should be doubled in keeping in view the spirit of accepted recommendation of the 6th Pay Commission.

(B) **Other issues:**

8. **Policy on replacement of laptops:**

FROA is thankful to Board for providing officers of JAG and above with laptops to undertake official work. Railway has also notified codal life of laptops as three years. However, no policy decision has yet been taken to replace the laptops issued to officers which have completed their codal life. Policy in this regard may please be communicated by Board.

9. **CUG hand sets:**

Railway Board has arranged Closed User Group mobile telephone facility for the officers of Indian Railway. These CUG phones are being extensively used to facilitate communication. FROA requests that officers should either be issued handsets or should be reimbursed for purchasing handsets as per their grade.

10. **Allotment of Railway quarters to family members appointed on compassionate ground:**

The eligible family members of Railway officers who have been appointed on compassionate ground after the death of an officer in service are now being provided Railway quarter in officers colonies as per a revised entitlement. However, these orders are not being made applicable to the cases of officers who have died before the issue of the orders by some of the General Managers. It is requested that position in this regard may be clarified to Zonal Railways and other units so that small number of families of deceased officers are not deprived of this benefit.

FROA requests Board to deliberate on the above issues and fix up an early date for a meeting with full Board.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

(G.N.Asthana)
President/FROA