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Memorandum on improving Mumbai Suburban Rail Network

Presented to Shri Piyush Goyal,
Hon. Minister of Railways on 13th January 2018

Prepared with suggestions from
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Date: 13 January 2018

Shri Piyush Goyal
Hon. Minister of Railways,
Rail Bhavan,
New Delhi - 110 001

Dear Sir,

Some 80 lakh daily commuters using the Mumbai suburban rail network daily, face issues of safety and security that need to be urgently addressed at the highest level. We have listed a few of these issues on the basis of replies received by us under the Right to Information (RTI) from the Railway authorities. One document was obtained from a reliable source on condition of anonymity. There is immediate need to fix responsibility and time limits to resolve these issues.

We earnestly urge you to look into these on a priority basis and initiate prompt action towards resolving them. We are confident you will find them important too.

Sr. No	Issues	Particulars	Annexures	Pg No
1	Recurring fractures on railway tracks in Mumbai division	<p>Between January 2014 and October 2017, there were 525 fractures on railway tracks in the Mumbai divisions of Western and Central Railways. These recurring fractures on the rail tracks are really worrisome and endanger the lives of all commuters.</p> <p>Prayer: Kindly appoint an expert investigating agency or a high-level Committee to find a permanent solution to these rail fractures.</p>	Data obtained from Western and Central Railways under RTI.	8-12
2	Comprehensive solution for the Mumbai Suburban Rail Network	<p>The Mumbai Suburban Rail Network is not equipped to handle the daily load of almost 80 lakh commuters or to take the necessary steps to ensure safe travel for them. In the absence of uniformity in decision making by the Western and Central Railway divisions, it is the commuters who continue to suffer.</p> <p>Prayer: The Ministry of Railways and the Railway Board must take a holistic approach and create a single body for the Mumbai Suburban Rail Network, to take over responsibility and decision making powers from Western and Central Railways. This will facilitate and expedite decision making and bring uniformity in the working of the Suburban Rail Network, resulting in safe commute for daily passengers.</p>		

3	Action taken on the Committee Report on “Review of Rising trends of Accidental deaths in Mumbai Suburban System”	<p>On 1 December 2015, the Railway Minister had appointed a Committee, consisting of three members of Parliament (MPs), the general manager (GM) of Central Railway, two Municipal Commissioners (MCGM and KDMC) and two members from the public to review the rising trend of accidental deaths in the Mumbai Suburban Rail Network.</p> <p>In its report submitted in January 2016 to the Railway Board, the Committee on page no.17 says, “The Harbour line is using 36 rakes at present with 4 minutes’ headway and will need another 36 rakes to ensure two minutes’ headway.”</p> <p>Prayer: Immediate action on the recommendations of the Committee Report for increasing the number of rakes and frequency of trains on the Harbour line.</p>	Report of the Committee	13-19
4	Report of the Commissioner of Railway Safety - (CRS)	<p>There are reports of deaths or injuries caused to the commuters daily. A local train accident in 2014 due to a defect in the manufacturing of Schaku coupler resulted in the separation of bogies and derailment near Titwala (CR).</p> <p>Prayer: The Commissioner of Railway Safety should be given more powers to ensure safety of passengers and implementation of safety measures within fixed time limits instead of just preparing and submitting Reports to the Railway Board.</p>		
5	Absence of any object detection system on railway tracks	<p>At present, there exists no system / mechanism to detect any metal / wooden object placed on the railway track on Mumbai Suburban Rail Network. This could lead in derailment or accident of the train running on the track.</p> <p>Prayer: Immediate compliance with the Bombay High Court directive dated 17 March 2017.</p>	Copy of the Bombay HC order	20-25
6	Strengthen the Parsik Tunnel on Central	<p>Water seepage caused by an increase in human habitation over the tunnel is making the Thane to Diva fast track a dangerous route for commuters as well</p>		

	Railway's Thane-Diva fast track	<p>as all trains. This is also endangering lives of lakhs of commuters who travel daily on this route.</p> <p>Prayer: Remove all encroachments from the top of the tunnel and its proximity in coordination with the local municipal authority, after conducting a structural audit of the tunnel.</p>		
7	Curtailling powers of the Railway Board and bestowing more executive powers on the DRM and GM	<p>The Railway Board at present is vested with all the executive powers, which makes the Divisional Railway Managers and General Managers fully dependent on the Railway Board. This is hampering speedy solution in several issues, such as infrastructural improvements or safety of commuters.</p> <p>Prayer: The Railway Board should function only at the policymaking level and delegate all executive powers to Divisional Railway Managers (DRMs) and General Managers (GM).</p>		
8	Allow cancellation / re-issuance of Season Ticket	<p>There is no facility for reissue of a season ticket at present as it was rolled back years ago. Season tickets are issued on the basis of an ID card issued by the Railways or any other valid ID issued by the Government. This ID number and the season ticket number, printed on the ticket should enable reissue of lost/ stolen season ticket and authorise re-issuance of a new one for the remaining period.</p> <p>Prayer: To allow reissuance of a lost/ stolen/ misplaced season ticket and authorise reissue of a new one on the basis of the ID card and photocopy of such lost/ stolen or misplaced ticket for the remaining validity period.</p>		
9	Installation of CCTVs inside the train ticket examiner (TTE) rooms at all railway stations	<p>There have been incidents of train ticket examiners (TTE) assaulting and extorting money from the ticketless passengers inside the TTE rooms. On 17 December 2017, one CCTV camera was installed inside the TTE room and another at the Railway Protection Force (RPF) office at Dadar Central station, Mumbai and thereafter no complaint about any ill treatment or corruption inside that room has been reported.</p>		

		<p>Also, the revenue might possibly have risen to some extent due to curbing of bribery by Railway officials.</p> <p>Prayer: CCTV cameras should be installed in each TTE and RPF rooms / offices at railway stations. This drive should be started with the Mumbai division and should be subsequently implemented all over India.</p>		
10	Recruitment of Government Railway Police (GRP) personnel	<p>Around 4,000 posts for the Govt. Railway Police (GRP) in the Mumbai division have been approved 20 years ago, of which around 500 are vacant. The Commissioner-GRP has recommended additional 7,200 personnel, mostly female. GRP are State Police and are appointed in the Railways on deputation. The Railways pay 50% of the salary while the State Government pays the remaining 50%.</p> <p>Prayer: To fill the vacant posts at the earliest and appoint 7,200 additional Govt. Railway Police personnel for the Mumbai division.</p>	Reply received under RTI from Commissioner -GRP, Mumbai	26-28
11	Immediate compensation to the passengers for train delays/ accidents	<p>The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) has already passed orders to compensate passengers, who suffered due to delayed trains. One passenger, injured at Churchgate railway station due to a metal object falling on him, was eventually paralysed.</p> <p>Prayer: Indian Railways should immediately compensate such passengers as per the order issued by the NCDRC.</p>	Order issued by NCDRC awarding compensation to the victim for the loss.	29-44 45-49
12	Delegation of the RPF constables in coaches reserved for disabled passengers	<p>Several times, able-bodied passengers, many of whom are either police or Railway personnel, occupy the coach reserved for divyang disabled commuters in suburban trains.</p> <p>Prayer: Delegate at least one RPF constable inside each coach reserved for disabled passengers on Mumbai suburban trains to make sure that able-bodied commuters do not enter these coaches. Also direct the ticket checkers to conduct surprise checks in such reserved coaches.</p>		

13	Protection of child rights at railway stations	<p>On 11 December 2013, the Railway Board issued Standard Operative Procedures (SOP) for the protection of child rights at all railway stations across the country. This was the outcome of a directives issued by the Delhi High Court and guidelines issued by the Railway Board.</p> <p>Prayer: Compliance by the General Manager with the said directives and fixing responsibility. Also, initiate strict action for non-compliance over the past four years.</p>	February 2013 order from the Delhi High Court in Khushboo Jain vs. Union of India	50-65
14	Overdue payments on water bills by the Railways to BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC)	<p>The Railways (Western & Central) have not paid the water charges bill of Rs400 crore to the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) since 2001. Thus under Rule no.4.7 of MCGM Water Charges, the BMC has levied 2% additional monthly charges on those outstanding water dues. This penalty that the Railways will pay now, could have been used for improving infrastructure or passenger amenities.</p> <p>Prayer: To initiate immediate payment of all the pending dues owed by the Railways to the BMC. Also, take action on the erring officials responsible for non-payment of the dues to BMC within the stipulated time.</p>	Data from BMC (Hydraulic Engineer's Dept) obtained under RTI	66-67
15	Validity of Konkan Railway tickets (reserved or unreserved) for travel on local trains from Panvel	<p>Long distance commuters on Western and Central Railway are allowed to continue their journey on suburban trains with valid tickets. However, the same facility is not available for Konkan Railway passengers. They are required to buy separate tickets for suburban rail travel to their destination causing harassment.</p> <p>Prayer: To permit Konkan Railway passengers to continue their journey on suburban trains with a valid (reserved/unreserved) ticket without having to buy a separate suburban railway ticket.</p>		

16	Merger of RPF and Government Railway Police (GRP)	<p>The Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP) function under the control of the Union government and State government, respectively. Both serve different purposes and functions. Being unaware of this difference, commuters often fail to report the matter to the appropriate body (RPF/ GRP).</p> <p>Prayer: To provide an alternative by either merging the two bodies or by devolving the duties of RPF to GRP, since the latter has more powers for enforcement of law and order than the RPF.</p>		
17	Violations of Supreme Court guidelines by the RPF in arrest procedures	<p>RPF personnel, while making arrests, violated Supreme Court directives in cases of DK Basu vs the State of West Bengal and Arnesh Kumar vs the State of Bihar. The RPF departmental inquiry report clearly shows violation of the constitutional rights guaranteed under Articles 21 and 14 of the Constitution of India.</p> <p>Prayer: Ensure strict compliance of the Supreme Court directives in such cases and hold senior RPF officers accountable and responsible for non-compliance of the Supreme Court directives / guidelines about arrests.</p>	RPF Departmental Inquiry Report received from reliable source	68-81
18	Dismissal should be the only punishment in proven cases of corruption	<p>RPF fails to comply with the directive laid down by the Supreme Court, which states that, “dismissal is the only punishment for charges of corruption.”</p> <p>Prayer: The two RPF personnel caught on camera while collecting bribes at LTT (Kurla Terminus Mumbai) must be dismissed forthwith.</p>	SC judgment on 1-9-201 (UP State Road Transport Corp. & Anr. Vs. Gopal Shukla & Anr.)	82-96
19	Noise pollution at Railways Stations	<p>A Survey report conducted by Awaaz Foundation on noise pollution at railway stations in Mumbai has raised many important issues</p>	Survey Report	91-101

This memorandum has been put together through the investigation and effort of well-known railway activist Mr Samir Zaveri and other activists including Mr Shirish Shanbhag, Mr AV Shenoy, Ms Sumaira Abdulali of Awaaz Foundation and our colleagues at Moneylife Foundation.

With Best Regards,

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