

EASTERN RAILWAY

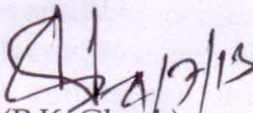
No. E.240/0/Vol. VIII

Kolkata, Dated 04/07/2013

ALL CONCERNED

Sub:-Instruction/guidelines for dealing with Press/Media.

The following copy of Chief Public Relation Officer, Eastern Railway's circular letter issued with the approval of GM bearing No. G.12/C/PRO/MS dated 04/06/2013 containing CHAPTER - IV of PR Manual incorporating instructions of Railway Board with regard to dealing with Press/Media is reproduced below information guidance and strict compliance.


(P.K. Ghosh)

for Chief Personnel Officer

Copy of Chief Public Relation Officer/ER's letter No. G.12/C/PRO/MS dated 04/06/2013 addressed to All PHODs, DRMs.

Sub:-Instruction/guidelines for dealing with Press/Media.

Clear instructions exist in CHAPTER-IV of PR manual with regard to dealing with Press/Media. As per the instructions of the Railway Board, all concerned are requested to follow the same.

1. At the Railway/PU Headquarters level, **the General Managers** and the **CPROs** are authorized to meet the media in a formal Press Conference or informally depending upon the importance of the nature of the information to be given. However, the General Managers may especially authorize the PHODs to give information or be accessible to the representatives of the media. Any other officer, if approached, by the media, is to refer them to the CPRO.

Contd....2/-

2. At the divisional level, **Divisional Railway Managers (DRMs)** are authorized to meet the representatives of the media approaching them for factual information on specific subjects. They may also send news items concerning the working of the Railways (particularly in their Division and other matters of local interest) to the media directly or through the local office of Press Information Bureau (if available). DRMs may hold press conferences occasionally. However, in respect of queries on wider policy matters concerning the Zonal Railway or the Indian Railways, the representatives of the media may **politely** be directed to CPRO or ADG (PR)/Railway Board. In order to ensure that no unauthorized information/material is supplied to the press, the DRMs should generally not delegate this work to a Divisional Officer except to ADRMs. All such information/material should have DRMs' approval before it is supplied to the press.
3. It may kindly be made clear that no unauthorized person should speak to or interact with the media as it may amount to un-becoming of a Railway servant. In this connection, the provisions relating to official documents and responsibility of Railway servants [contained in Rule-11 of Railway Services (Conduct) Rules, 1966] may also be kept in view.

Recently, it has been seen that some officers even staff at Stations/Train Pilots/TTEs other than those authorized have been interacting with press/media. This leads to unnecessary embarrassment, which can be avoided by diverting press and media to contact CPRO.

It is requested that the instructions for dealing with the press/media should be followed by all concerned. However, Xerox copies of the instructions are enclosed herewith for kind perusal and ready reference of all concerned.

This issues with the approval of GM.

DA: As above.

Contd...3/-

CHAPTER - IV

MEETING & DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

1. AUTHORITY TO DEAL WITH THE MEDIA

- 1.1 **At the Railway Board level**, only Ministers, Chairman, Members, Secretary Railway Board, Director Public Relations (DPR), Director Information & Publicity (DIP) or any other Officer(s) especially authorized by the Minister of Railways may give information or be accessible to the representatives of the media. Any other officer, if approached by the representatives of the media is to refer them to the DPR (*the official Spokesperson for the Ministry of Railways*) or in his absence to the Information Officer. The Chairman is to be kept informed of the press conferences, if any, being held by any Member of the Board.
- 1.2 **At the Railway/PU Headquarters level**, the General Managers and the CPROs are authorized to meet the media in a formal Press Conference or informally depending upon the importance of the nature of the information to be given. However, the General Managers may especially authorize the PHODs to give information or be accessible to the representatives of the media. Any other officer, if approached, by the media, is to refer them to the CPRO.
- 1.3 **At the Divisional level**, Divisional Railway Managers (DRMs) are permitted to meet the representatives of the media approaching them for factual information on specific subjects. They may also send news items concerning the working of the Railways (*particularly in their Division and other matters of local interest*) to the media directly or through the local office of Press Information Bureau (if available). DRMs may also hold press conferences **occasionally**. However, in respect of queries on wider policy matters concerning the Zonal Railway or the Indian Railways, the representatives of the media may politely be directed to GM/CPRO or DPR/Railway Board. In order to ensure that no unauthorized information/material is supplied to the press, the DRMs should **generally not** delegate this work to a Divisional Officer except to ADRMs. All such information/material should have **DRMs approval** before it is supplied to the press. Services of PROs (*wherever positioned*) may be utilized for the purpose.
- 1.4 It is made clear that **no unauthorized person should speak to or interact with the media** as it may amount to un-becoming of a railway servant. In this connection, the provisions relating to official documents and responsibility of railway servants (*contained in Rule-11 of Railway Servants (Conduct) Rules, 1966*) may also be kept in view.

Contd...4/-

2. DISSEMINATING INFORMATION TO MEDIA, MEDIA-FEEDBACK & REJOINDERS

- 2.1 Notices of all important meetings, conferences, visits of delegations and VIPs shall, as a matter of routine, be sent to the DPR/CPROs for organizing appropriate media publicity. Even if the executive department feels that the subject matter does not warrant publicity, the decision to publicise in the media or otherwise shall be taken in active consultation with the CPRO.
- 2.2 All PHODs/DRMs must feed the PR Department regularly with information/material about activities, projects and achievements for making suitable 'handouts' and 'features' or for arranging audio-visual coverage as and when such information is available with them.
- 2.3 DPR/CPROs will be responsible to develop an appropriate **data bank** on various subjects for their use from time to time on the basis of information received and get it updated by executive departments from time to time.
- 2.4 An **annual action plan** of PR events may be made at the beginning of each financial year on the basis of major works being undertaken on the Railways and the performance targets laid down for various executive departments. In addition, the PR Department should project specific items of achievement which would be undertaken during the year and keep the concerned departments advised in advance for inflow of data at appropriate time.
- 2.5 As a routine, PR Department should ensure that concerned departments are fed with **extracts of press reports** deserving attention of the concerned PHODs/DRMs. **Rejoinders**, if necessary on any new report, must be issued **within a week** of its publication. If need be, some of the information required for such rejoinders can be collected even on telephone from the concerned executive Departments to avoid delays. PR Department as well as the concerned executive Departments shall be jointly responsible for timely rebuttals of undue press criticism.

3. PUBLICITY DURING ACCIDENTS/OTHER UNUSUAL OCCURENCES

- 3.1 **In the event of accidents**, resulting in damage/causalities, the image of Railways invariably suffers because of adverse reactions in public and media. In such situations, Railways must **display greater responsibility** not only in relief and rescue operations but also in interacting with the media with correct and updated information.
- 3.2 Sometimes, newspapers publish **contrary versions** relating to any accidents attributing them to railway sources. It is, therefore, necessary that only the authorized officers (*mentioned in para 1.1 to 1.3*) interact with the media. Unauthorized person **should not** speak to the media (*as mentioned in para-1.4*).

- 3.3 It has **to be ensured that the media is kept informed** of the relief and rescue measures, passengers injured and dead, restorations of traffic, etc. to avoid breeding of gossip, rumours and sensational reporting in the absence of authentic information. CPROs must depute an official to monitor and scan through all the print and major electronic media reports, analyse them and take appropriate action immediately to correct any adverse trend for any report aimed at mere sensationalizing the untoward incident.
- 3.4 The media persons must be **briefed** at the accident site and if necessary, **at least once every day** at the Divisional/Zonal Headquarters on regular basis. For this purpose, the executive departments should ensure that the PR Department is fed with the latest information and update at top priority.
- 3.5 Appropriate **rejoinders and contradictions** must be issued and copies thereof should be sent to DPR, Railway Board for briefing the media at the national level. During such emergencies, a **close contact should be established with DPR Ministry of Railways**. It is of prime importance that PR activities have a **common strategy and one voice**.
- 3.6 Sometimes train services are disrupted badly because of other reasons such as **bandh calls, rail roko agitations, etc** by political/pressure groups etc. for causes many a time not even remotely connected with railway operations.
- 3.7 In situations mentioned in **para-3.6**, where **advance information** of such agitations is available, zonal railways must publicise about the possibility of train services getting affected from the relevant date through suitable press notifications. These notifications must make it amply clear that the agitations and bandh calls are responsible for the cancellations/diversions of the train services, if any. Wherever necessary advertisements can also be brought out in the newspapers, TV and Radio in this regard. Apart from conveying information, such initiatives may also generate opinion against such bandh calls/agitations.
- 3.8 A similar action (*as mentioned in para-3.7*) may be taken for publicizing **disruption of traffic due to floods, fog, etc** regretting inconvenience caused to the passengers and stating clearly that the reasons for such disruptions are beyond the control of Railway Administrations.

Index No. 1023: Detailed instructions regarding Railway officials authorized to interact with/hold Press Conferences etc. with Press/Media and other allied guidelines as envisaged in CHAPTER - IV of PR Manual.
