NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE TRUST
(Public Welfare • Justice • Development)
(A Social Institution Established under Central Act No. 2 of 1882)
Establishment No. – 212/IV/2026
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Subject : Urgent representation seeking a nationwide, time-bound survey and independent inspection of all railway stations across India in view of the alarming findings of CAG Report No. 31 of 2026 revealing that more than 89% of inspected stations were deficient in one or more Minimum Essential Amenities, serious deficiencies in drinking-water testing including presence of E. coli bacteria, inadequate sanitation and ineffective monitoring — request for immediate public-health and passenger-safety measures throughout Indian Railways.

Sir,

National Public Service Trust is a public-interest organisation working for protection of constitutional rights, public health, good governance, administrative accountability and improvement of essential public services. The Trust is constrained to address the present representation concerning an issue having nationwide ramifications affecting crores of railway passengers across India, in light of the extremely serious findings recorded by the **Comptroller and Auditor General of India in Report No. 31 of 2026 (Railways), "Passenger amenities and sanitation at non-suburban railway stations in Indian Railways."** The Report itself records

that the thematic audit was conducted on a pan-India basis covering 512 stations across 16 Railway Zones.

The findings of the constitutional auditor disclose a systemic problem rather than isolated deficiencies at a few stations. **Out of 512 railway stations inspected, 458 stations, i.e. more than 89%, were deficient in one or more Minimum Essential Amenities, including drinking water, seating arrangements, toilets, platform shelters, fans, water coolers and signage.** Even high-revenue and high-footfall stations falling within NSG-1 to NSG-3 categories exhibited significant deficiencies. The CAG further observed that Passenger Amenities Management System data confirmed that such deficiencies persisted across different station categories and Railway Zones. In other words, only about 11% of the inspected railway stations were found without shortfall in Minimum Essential Amenities; the accompanying published report records that merely 54 of the 512 selected stations had provided all minimum essential amenities as per norms.

The situation becomes substantially more serious when viewed from the perspective of public health and safe drinking water. **The CAG has specifically recorded that inspection of water-supply systems was not conducted according to the prescribed periodicity and that there were shortfalls in testing drinking water for residual chlorine, bacteriological analysis and chemical analysis.** Most significantly, **the audit recorded the presence of total coliform bacteria, including E. coli bacteria, indicating unsatisfactory drinking-water quality at railway stations.**

The material accompanying the CAG findings further reports that water samples collected from water coolers tested positive for E. coli at multiple railway stations situated in different parts of the country. It also records that chemical analysis of drinking water was not conducted by health inspectors at 179 stations across 11 Zones, was not undertaken at the prescribed periodicity at 77 stations across six Zones, and, most disturbingly, tests covering all parameters prescribed under the Uniform Drinking Water Quality Protocol were not carried out at any of the 512 selected stations.

These findings cannot be treated merely as deficiencies in passenger convenience. Safe drinking water, sanitation, functional toilets and basic passenger amenities are fundamental public-health necessities. Indian Railways is one of the largest public transportation systems in the country and the CAG records that during 2023-24 alone it carried approximately 292.4 crore non-suburban passengers. Thus, any systemic failure relating to drinking-water quality or sanitation has the potential to expose an extraordinarily large population to preventable health risks.

Railway stations are used every day not merely by ordinary passengers but by children, women, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, patients, advocates, judicial

officers, members of the Armed Forces, police personnel, Central and State Government employees, constitutional functionaries, public servants, students, workers, tourists and pilgrims. Public drinking-water facilities provided at such stations carry an inherent assurance that the water offered by a public authority is fit for human consumption. **The detection of E. coli and deficiencies in prescribed bacteriological testing therefore raise an issue directly concerning public health, governmental accountability and the protection of life under Article 21 of the Constitution of India.**

The CAG findings also reveal that the problem is compounded by deficiencies in sanitation. **Non-functional and unhygienic toilets/urinals, deficiencies in garbage management and continued sanitation shortcomings were noticed despite substantial expenditure on station-cleaning activities. Further, the audit found medical-care arrangements at railway stations largely inadequate, with emergency medical rooms and recommended medical boxes absent at a majority of inspected stations, thereby creating additional risks to passenger safety.**

Equally significant is that this situation cannot prima facie be attributed merely to lack of financial resources. The CAG recorded persistent underutilisation of Budget Grant for passenger amenities ranging between 36% and 44% during 2019-20 to 2023-24, while 59% of the 395 passenger-amenity works reviewed were delayed. The findings therefore disclose serious questions regarding planning, execution, monitoring and institutional accountability.

The CAG has ultimately concluded that deficiencies in monitoring, enforcement and accountability at all levels diluted the objective of ensuring minimum essential passenger amenities and sanitation standards despite the existence of policies, systems and financial resources. It has expressly recommended achievement of prescribed Minimum Essential Amenities at all stations within defined timelines, station-wise time-bound action plans, strengthening of sanitation and garbage management and compliance with prescribed protocols for inspection and comprehensive testing of drinking-water quality.

The aforesaid findings of the constitutional auditor disclose an issue of national importance having a direct and recurring impact upon the health, safety and dignity of railway passengers throughout India. Since the audit covered only 512 stations out of thousands of railway stations across the country, the findings themselves create an urgent necessity for a comprehensive verification of the present condition of all railway stations, instead of assuming that stations outside the audit sample are compliant. Preventive intervention at this stage is essential; public authorities cannot reasonably wait for an outbreak of water-borne disease or another public-health incident before verifying whether drinking water supplied to passengers is safe.

Therefore, in view of the aforesaid facts and circumstances, National Public Service Trust, in the larger public interest, calls upon the competent authorities to immediately ensure the following actions:

1. Constitute and undertake a nationwide, time-bound special inspection/survey of every railway station in India, through appropriate multidisciplinary teams, to verify compliance with all Minimum Essential Amenities and prescribed standards concerning drinking water, sanitation, toilets, waiting areas, seating, platform shelters, water coolers, accessibility for persons with disabilities, garbage management, emergency medical facilities and other mandatory passenger amenities.
2. Immediately collect drinking-water samples from all railway stations across India, including water taps, water coolers, storage tanks, filtration systems and other passenger drinking-water sources, and have them tested through competent/accredited laboratories for E. coli, total coliform, residual chlorine, bacteriological, chemical and all other parameters prescribed under the Uniform Drinking Water Quality Protocol; any source found unsafe shall immediately be taken out of public use and safe alternative drinking water provided until compliance is certified.
3. Prepare a station-wise deficiency report and time-bound corrective action plan for every Railway Zone and Division, fixing responsibility upon the concerned officers for failure to maintain prescribed amenities, sanitation and drinking-water testing protocols, and accord highest priority to deficiencies having direct implications for public health and passenger safety.
4. Establish a permanent transparent nationwide monitoring mechanism under the Railway Board for periodic water-quality testing, sanitation inspection and verification of Minimum Essential Amenities, with station-wise test dates, water-quality results, inspection status and corrective measures being placed in the public domain and prominently displayed at the respective railway stations.
5. Issue appropriate directions to all Zonal Railways and Divisions for time-bound implementation of the recommendations contained in CAG Report No. 31 of 2026, and place a consolidated nationwide Action Taken Report in the public domain specifying the stations inspected, deficiencies identified, water-test results, remedial measures undertaken, responsible authorities and timelines for achieving full compliance.

The matter concerns neither an isolated railway station nor an individual grievance. It concerns the health and safety of crores of citizens using a national public transportation system and raises issues of uniform application throughout the territory

of India. The findings emanate from the Comptroller and Auditor General of India and demonstrate widespread deficiencies across Railway Zones. Consequently, the matter requires intervention at the highest policy and administrative level and cannot be left to fragmented or station-specific responses.

National Public Service Trust therefore expects immediate, nationwide and demonstrable action upon this representation considering the public health and safety of railway passengers throughout the country.

Yours faithfully,
Krishnakant
(Chairman)
National Public Service Trust

Enclosures (copy of): CAG Report No. 31 of 2026 (Railways) – Passenger amenities and sanitation at non-suburban railway stations in Indian Railways.