

# RAILWAY RESTRUCTURING TO LEAD TO CLOSURE OF MAJOR WINGS

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The Special Railway Establishment for Strategic Technology and Holistic Advancement has been closed. PTIPTI

Going ahead with its downsizing plan, the Indian Railways has announced the closure of the Special Railway Establishment for Strategic Technology and Holistic Advancement (SRESTHA), Lucknow.

Established in March 2016, the SRESTHA directorate, part of the Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO), was tasked with the role of taking up long-term railway research projects requiring technological advancement.

As part of the restructuring plan, the Railways also decided to merge 32 directorates of the RDSO and brought them under seven verticals — administration, infrastructure, rolling stock, traction and power supply, signal and telecommunication, resource and testing and traffic and psychology.

Another notification is that the Geotech Engineering Directorate will be merged with the Track and Bridges & Structures Directorate.

The establishment of Principal Executive Director, Defence Research, at the Defence Research and Development Organisation, New Delhi, was detached from the RDSO.

The Railways also proposed to create new posts in the rank of Executive Director, Design, to be posted at the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai, Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala and Modern Coach Factory, Rae Bareilly, under the Railway Board's Rolling Stock Directorate. The creation of the top-ranking posts assumes significance against the backdrop of the decision to roll out more than 200 Vande Bharat rakes at an estimated Rs. 26,000 crore.

## Sanyal's proposals

The restructuring plan of the country's largest employer and transporter which is resulting in the closure or merger of major establishments and private participation in running hospitals and schools is in line with the recommendations for rationalisation of government bodies made by Principal Economic Adviser Sanjeev Sanyal.

In his proposal to the Railway Minister, Mr. Sanyal called for the winding up of organisations such as the Central Organisation for Railway Electrification (CORE), the Central Organisation for Modernisation Of Workshops (COFMOW), the Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS) and the Indian Railways Organisation for Alternative Fuel (closed on September 7, 2021).

The Railways was continuing with the closure/merger of crucial establishments despite stiff resistance from the employees' unions, said N. Kanniah, president, All India Railwaymen Federation.

"Similarly other establishments proposed for closure have crucial modernisation, technological and research-oriented goals in the near future. Winding them up prematurely not only defeats

the very purpose of their creation but demoralises the officers/employees,” he warned.

In a letter to Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, National Federation of Indian Railwaymen general secretary M. Raghavaiah said there was widespread unrest and resentment against the proposal of the Principal Economic Adviser .

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