

## THE INDIAN MUSIC INDUSTRY

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15<sup>th</sup> September 2022

To,

V. B. Sood

Station Development Director & CEO, IRSDC

7th Floor, Tower-1, Konnectus Building,

Bhavbhuti Marg, New Delhi – 110002

**Subject: Modernization of Railway Stations with Performance Centres**

Dear Sir,

We, the Indian Music Industry (“IMI”), welcome the plan to develop railway stations to include “rooftop plazas, shopping centres, food courts and fine dining restaurants” per the Economic Times report titled “In next couple of years, you could be enjoying a family dinner at a swanky railway station”, dated 30 July 2022. **We wish to provide our suggestions to further include performing centres in this plan to enrich the station experience and create an additional source of revenue for the Indian Railways.**

IMI is a registered society under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act, 1961 and represents the business and trade interests of the Indian recorded music companies on a pan-India basis with a membership base of 205 music labels. IMI is affiliated to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, the association representing the recorded music industry worldwide.

*Proposal to include Performing Centres in Station Development Blueprint*

The Indian Railways have always been an integral contributor to economic development in the country, integrating markets and increasing trade since their inception. As indicated in the press release discussing the National Rail Plan for India – 2030, the plan is to create a “future-ready” railway system<sup>1</sup>, and enhanced consumer services and modernization of railway stations, which form the core goals of the NRP and the Indian Railways Station Development Corporation Limited (IRSDCL), can be instrumental in creating the envisioned future. One of the strategic goals of the 2020 Vision document, was the large-scale generation of productive employment.<sup>2</sup>

While it is undisputable that the Railways have had a major impact on interregional and international trade, studies have shown that the Indian Railways could contribute more towards economic development by improving passenger services, among many other factors.<sup>3</sup> The transformation of Indian railway stations into commercial hubs for food as well as entertainment, effectively helps achieve the many goals outlined above, improving the share of the Indian Railways to the GDP and other economic metrics of the country.

In 2020, a large number of artists, technicians, sessions musicians were rendered unemployed with the closure of film production, live events and the F&B sector.<sup>4</sup> A post pandemic evaluation reveals that India’s organized events and activations industry, among others, has been among the worst hit. It was estimated to be worth ₹8,300 crore in 2019 and has clocked in ₹3,200 crore in 2021 as per the FICCI-EY Media and Entertainment Report 2022. The industry is set to manage 20% y-o-y revival, which demonstrates the economic potential of performance centres at railway stations, that could feature local as well as national talent.<sup>5</sup>

### ***The Benefits of Transforming Railway Stations into Community Hubs***

The Expert Group, constituted in December 1998 to study the railway sector, termed it as the ‘split personality’. On one hand, the Railways are seen as a commercial organisation and on

<sup>1</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1806617>

<sup>2</sup>

[https://indianrailways.gov.in/railwayboard/uploads/directorate/infra/downloads/VISION\\_2020\\_Eng\\_SUBMITTED\\_TO\\_PARLIAMENT.pdf](https://indianrailways.gov.in/railwayboard/uploads/directorate/infra/downloads/VISION_2020_Eng_SUBMITTED_TO_PARLIAMENT.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Bogart, Dan and Chaudhary, Latika, Railways in Colonial India: An Economic Achievement? (May 1, 2012). Available at

SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2073256> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2073256>

<sup>4</sup> <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/media/entertainment/music-industry-hit-hard-by-coronavirus-smaller-labels-face-existential-threat/articleshow/74792860.cms>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.financialexpress.com/brandwagon/on-the-comeback-trail-live-events-take-centre-stage/2487524/>



the other hand, it is treated as a social organisation which must perform its social obligations.<sup>6</sup> Railways Stations as community hubs with commercial spaces for live music entertainment embody this persona, in line with recent actions by the Indian Railways.

The Indian Railways are no strangers to the concept of music entertainment for travel. In 2016, the Konkan Railway Corporation hosted live music performances at the Madgaon station in Goa to entertain passengers and tourists.<sup>7</sup> Recently, the Shatabdi and Vande Bharat trains in the Delhi Division are set to offer an entertaining journey to passengers as they will soon be able to enjoy radio facilities during their rail journey.<sup>8</sup> The customized music experience and RJ entertainment in trains, aimed at giving passengers a feel about cities they are traveling, will be disseminated through the passengers' address system. Further, spokesperson for the Northern Railway was quoted saying how “music is the best combination with travel and enhances the possibilities of good mood in travels, the best companion...” and the Indian Railways is set to receive revenue amounting to Rs 43.20 lakh per annum.<sup>9</sup> This symbiotic relationship between entertainment and travel is mutually beneficial to the stakeholders, fostering revenue, culture and safety at the same time.

### *International examples*

Railway stations are a key public space and piece of infrastructure in a community. They are vital to many people to enable them to engage in work and social commitments. For young people and those without cars they can be essential in reducing their social isolation and ability to maintain community links. In a study conducted in the UK termed “EnterTRAINment”, the role of entertainment in crime prevention was observed between 1992 and 1999. A program coordinator worked with a community recording studio ‘Decibels’ to program local bands, promote the events and arrange for police to be present. The respondents to this study explained how the positive atmosphere created by the music and the enthusiasm of the young performers

<sup>6</sup> The Indian Railways Report 2001: Policy Imperatives For Reinvention And Growth, [http://www.rakeshmohan.com/docs/Railway\\_Report.pdf](http://www.rakeshmohan.com/docs/Railway_Report.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.indiatimes.com/news/india/konkan-railway-greets-passengers-with-live-music-performance-by-employees-252478.html>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.republicworld.com/india-news/general-news/indian-railways-to-soon-launch-radio-entertainment-in-shatabdi-vande-bharat-trains-articleshow.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2022/feb/27/shatabdi-vande-bharat-trains-soon-to-have-radio-entertainment-services-on-board-2424364.html>

was greatly appreciated and improved their perception of safety.<sup>10</sup> In terms of recommendations, the study found that retail and commercial developments on or near railway stations, such as shopping centres and cafes, community arts such as live music, and other endeavours such as community owned facilities such as halls and public spaces to rent, could all improve the local community.<sup>11</sup>

The International Union of Railways noted that Railway stations play an important role for sustainability strategies within cities.<sup>12</sup> They instigate the development of social, economic and environmental territory around their location. As a result, their own development as efficient and sustainable centres will in turn influence the development of the city in which they are located.<sup>13</sup>

When rail travel began to dwindle in the 1950s and 60s in the United States, the railway stations were redeveloped artistically to serve as transportation hubs as well as hip, modern entertainment centres, instantly increasing passenger traffic.<sup>14</sup> The Maputo train station, Caminho De Ferro De Moçambique, in Mozambique, hosts live performances around the year, attracts the local community as well as tourists for the historic look and feel it provides, much like the envisaged design plan by the Indian Railways, to factor in local ethos. The reports of the station roof in Somnath having a dozen shikhars representing 12 jyotirlingas, and Bihar's Gaya station plan to have a separate hall for pilgrims, are all steps that are welcomed for their ingenuity and passenger comfort.<sup>15</sup>

### ***Recommendation***

We would thus like to suggest the incorporation of performance centres into the station development blueprint of the Indian Railways, as it would increase revenue potential,

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[https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/~media/programsandprojects/publications/attachments/train\\_stations\\_community\\_wellbeing2.ashx](https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/~media/programsandprojects/publications/attachments/train_stations_community_wellbeing2.ashx)

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[https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/~media/programsandprojects/publications/attachments/train\\_stations\\_community\\_wellbeing2.ashx](https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/~media/programsandprojects/publications/attachments/train_stations_community_wellbeing2.ashx)

<sup>12</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/london/hi/people\\_and\\_places/news-id\\_9093000/9093688.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/london/hi/people_and_places/news-id_9093000/9093688.stm)

<sup>13</sup> [https://uic.org/IMG/pdf/2019\\_nextstation\\_railway\\_stations\\_boosting\\_the\\_city.pdf](https://uic.org/IMG/pdf/2019_nextstation_railway_stations_boosting_the_city.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> <https://livability.com/topics/experiences-adventures/rail-reinvented-8-train-stations-with-awesome-comeback-stories/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/railways/in-next-couple-of-years-you-could-be-enjoying-a-family-dinner-at-a-swanky-railway-station/articleshow/93240149.cms>

contribute to productive employment of artists and non-artists alike, modernize railway stations and attract the local community to invest in these spaces as well.

On behalf of IMI, thank you for your kind consideration and we look forward to establishing a mutually rewarding partnership.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Blaise Fernandes', with a stylized, flowing script.

Blaise Fernandes

President & CEO, Indian Music Industry