



The National Intelligence Daily

Published by the Director of Central Intelligence for Named Principals Only

TOP SECRET
No Foreign Dissem

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WEDNESDAY MAY 15, 1974

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Indian Rail Strike Still On; Other Unions Joining

The nationwide railway strike in India is in its second week with no end in sight. Other unions have called a general strike for today to express solidarity with the rail workers, but the turnout may be low, particularly among members of the civil service, who worry about government reprisals.

New Delhi is using relatively harsh measures to break the strike. Up to 15,000 strikers reportedly have been arrested so far. The government's action is supported by the military and big business.

Prime Minister Gandhi appears to see the strike primarily as a political problem. To prevent its being exploited successfully by the opposition parties, he has insisted on strict discipline within the Congress Party. This has caused leftists in the party, who usually support labor, to stay in line behind her despite some unhappiness.

Government officials say that sabotage and violence has been less than anticipated and that adequate



An armed guard on freight train leaving New Delhi

supplies of food and fuel are being moved. Passenger service in major urban centers, however, has been largely crippled.

If the strike persists at the present level, critical economic problems food

and energy shortages are likely to develop before the end of next week. The government, meanwhile, is counting on popular resentment of the dislocations caused by the strike to force the strikers to capitulate. [redacted]