



ALL INDIA STATE BANK OFFICERS' FEDERATION

(Registered under the Trade Unions Act 1926, Registration No: 727/MDS)

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Registered Office: 22, Rajaji Salai, Chennai- 600 001



CIRCULAR NO. 18/2026

Date: 10/01/2026

TO ALL OUR AFFILIATES

Subject: Engagement of SBI Officers for election-related non-banking duties (ERMO/SIR, West Bengal) – request for immediate intervention and institutional safeguards to prevent recurrence

We have sent a communication to the Deputy Managing Director (HR) & Corporate Development Officer, State Bank of India, Corporate Centre, Mumbai, on the captioned subject.

The content of the communication is reproduced below.

With Greetings,

Yours Comradely,

(Rupam Roy)
General Secretary

To,
The Deputy Managing Director (HR) & CDO
State Bank of India
Corporate Centre,
Madame Cama Road
Mumbai-400021.

Respected Sir,

Subject: Engagement of SBI Officers for election-related non-banking duties (ERMO/SIR, West Bengal) – request for immediate intervention and institutional safeguards to prevent recurrence

I hope this communication finds you well. I write in my capacity as General Secretary of the All India State Bank Officers' Federation (AISBOF) to bring to your kind attention a matter of serious and immediate concern.

AISBOF is constrained to place on record its strong apprehension regarding the increasing tendency to requisition officers of our Bank for election-related duties for extended periods, and particularly at highly sensitive operational phases of the financial year. While SBI officers have consistently cooperated with lawful

public duties in the larger national interest, the scale, timing, and prolonged nature of such deployments are now materially impairing essential banking functions and exposing the Bank to avoidable operational, compliance, and service risks. These deployments also cause significant personal disruption to officers, impacting performance continuity, training obligations, and legitimate career progression.

Given the gravity of the issue, we seek urgent intervention at the level of top management, both to address the present instance and to establish institutional safeguards to prevent such deployments from becoming routine.

1. As we understand, SBI is not merely a commercial institution; it is a critical public utility entrusted with safeguarding public deposits, ensuring uninterrupted customer service, delivering credit, especially to priority sectors and implementing Government programmes that directly affect citizens. Simultaneously, the Bank operates under stringent regulatory oversight and intensive performance expectations, with officers accountable for compliance, audit readiness, risk control, and business delivery, often amidst acute manpower constraints.

In this context, prolonged diversion of officers from branches and controlling offices has a direct and immediate impact on customer service, compliance preparedness, quality of service delivery, and business continuity.

2. AISBOF is particularly constrained to highlight the current instance in West Bengal, where officers have reportedly been deployed as Electoral Roll Micro Observers (ERMO) for the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process for an extended period from 26 December 2025 to 14 February 2026, nearly one and a half months.

This period coincides with the terminal phase of **Q3** and the opening, crucial phase of **Q4**, which is among the most sensitive windows of the financial year for closures, regulatory reporting, audit-linked activity, compliance deliverables, and business target performance. Prolonged diversion of officers during this period will inevitably disrupt core operations and dilute service standards across branches and offices, with cascading effects on customer service and business achievement.

3. Reports indicate that significant numbers of officers, 25 to 35 officers in some regions, have been requisitioned at a time when many branches are already choking out of acute staff shortages and functioning below sanctioned strength, with some reportedly operating with a single officer. Such withdrawal will severely affect routine branch functioning, processing and disbursement of credit, implementation of Government-sponsored schemes, and day-to-day service to depositors, pensioners, and small borrowers, while sharply increasing operational and compliance risks.

4. It is also reported that Probationary/Trainee Officers have been included in the deployment, disrupting training schedules and assessment requirements. Officers scheduled to appear for promotional examinations and mandatory learning requirements during the same period are distressed that they may lose legitimate career opportunities or face adverse performance consequences due to forced diversion.

5. Deployment instructions reportedly do not uniformly clarify insurance/accident coverage for the period of assignment. Further, there appears to be no clear and uniform protocol for release in cases of medical emergencies (self/family) or other genuine exigencies, resulting in avoidable hardship and anxiety for officers and their families.

6. AISBOF is deeply concerned by reports that officers have been compelled to travel long distances, often 750–800 km, for training at Kolkata and thereafter to their engagement locations, reportedly making their own arrangements and incurring costs upfront, with insufficient clarity on reimbursement. Short notice and seasonal fare escalation have aggravated the financial burden. As we believe, public duty cannot be executed by transferring avoidable costs and administrative uncertainty onto individual officers.

7. Election-related requisitioning guidelines generally emphasise roster-based selection, exemptions for essential categories, and requisitioning only to the minimum extent necessary so that critical public services are not adversely affected. Banking operations, particularly during quarter-end and year-end cycles, are specialised, time-bound, and compliance-critical. They cannot be interrupted casually without systemic consequences.

8. AISBOF is further constrained to raise a serious concern arising from field feedback: West Bengal appears to be the only State where PSB officers have been engaged for this SIR process. If officers of PSBs alone are disproportionately requisitioned while other segments are spared, it places SBI/PSBs at a structural disadvantage and creates an uneven playing field, enabling private-sector competitors to expand business while SBI continues to be assessed on identical performance and profitability parameters. Such an approach is inequitable and contrary to the principles of fair competition.

AISBOF's request for immediate top-management intervention

In view of the above, we request your urgent intervention and appropriate escalation so that:

- a) Routine and prolonged deployment of SBI officers for election-related duties is discouraged and strictly restricted, with the principle of “last resort” adhered to in letter and spirit.
- b) Deployment practices remain non-discriminatory, ensuring SBI/PSBs are not singled out and a level playing field is maintained.

- c) Where unavoidable, deployment is restricted to the shortest possible duration, with minimal disruption, and specifically avoiding quarter-end/year-end cycles.
- d) Clear, written, uniform instructions are issued on:
 - o Travel/boarding/lodging/Halting arrangements and reimbursement timelines,
 - o Logistical and security support,
 - o Insurance/accident coverage during engagement,
 - o Release for genuine exigencies, and
 - o Protection of training schedules, examinations, and promotional interests.
- e) Internal safeguards are issued to ensure affected officers are not penalised, including rationalisation of targets and explicit non-penalisation in performance assessment where officers are forcibly diverted.
- f) A suitable relaxation in CDS score and mandatory learning during the period of engagement to be ensured in order to facilitate a level playing field for those who are sent on long deputation.
- g) A standing institutional framework is evolved, identifying critical banking functions and sensitive operational windows, and communicated appropriately so that ad hoc requisitioning does not recur.

Officers of SBI have always contributed wholeheartedly during national priorities, be it working as financial soldiers during the time of COVID, be it crisis management during the critical phase of demonetisation, be it scaling unprecedented numbers in terms of Jan Dhan account opening and will continue to discharge lawful public responsibilities. However, prolonged and disproportionate diversion from essential banking duties cannot be normalised at the cost of citizens' banking services and the Bank's operational stability.

We request an early response and issuance of appropriate directions please.

Sd/-

(Rupam Roy)
General Secretary

At the Service of Members for more than 6 Decades

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