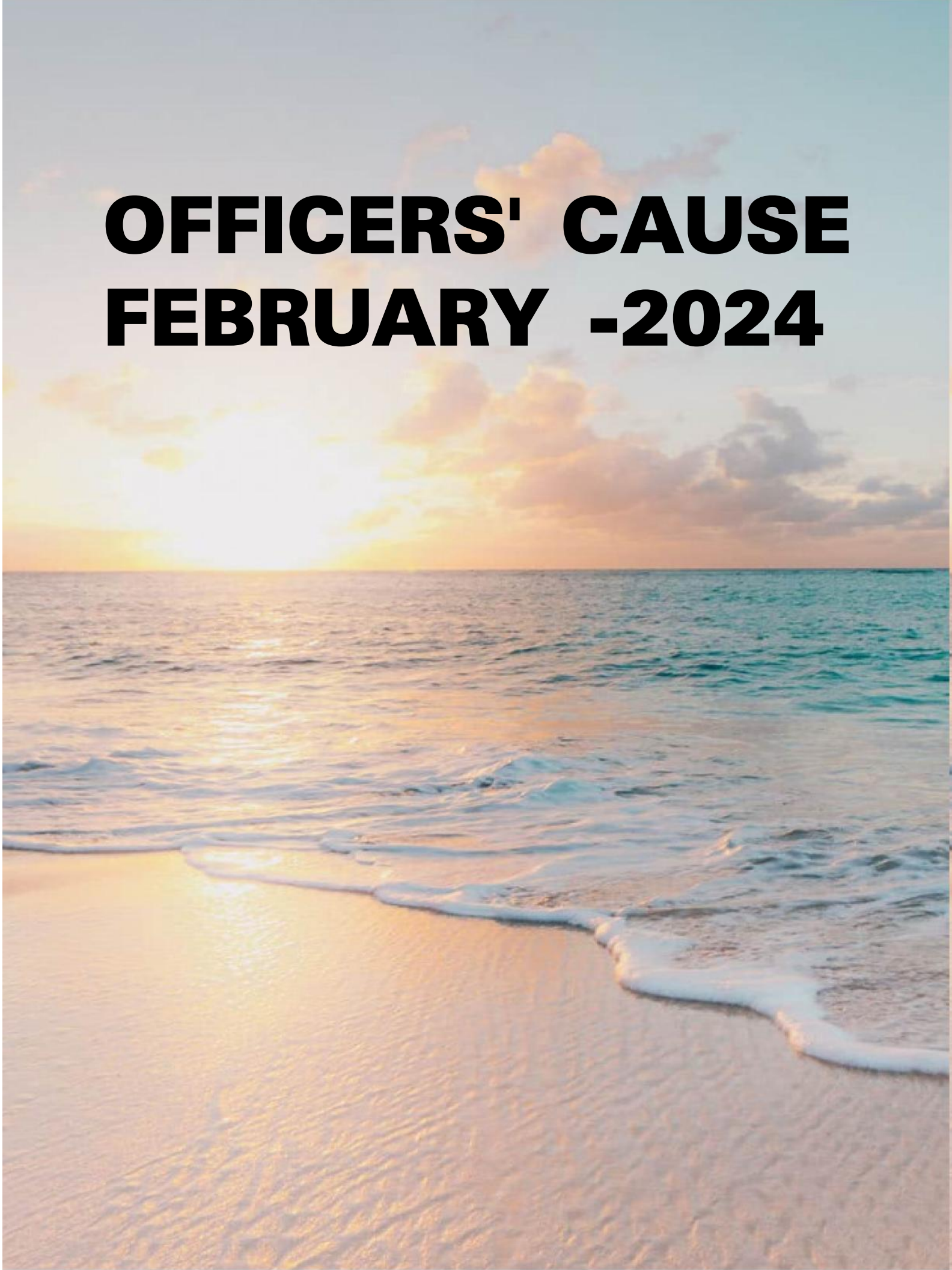


OFFICERS' CAUSE FEBRUARY -2024



Editorial

SETTING SMART GOALS CREATING A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT ACHIEVING NEW HEIGHTS PERSISTENTLY

State Bank of India (SBI), as one of the largest and most influential banks globally, has always strived for excellence and continuous growth. To maintain its pace and momentum in scaling new heights, cultivating a supportive environment is paramount. The invaluable contributions of each and every member of the SBI family are at the core of our journey to greatness.

As a part of our unwavering commitment to drive the Bank to newer heights, SBI recently conducted the "HR Synergy Meet" with the theme "**LEAP: Leveraging Engagement & Achieving Persistently**" at the State Bank Institute of Leadership, Kolkata. This event brought together top management and representatives from both the Federations, AISBOF & AISBISF, to collaboratively address critical challenges faced by our Bank.

Through collective collaborations, strategies and actionable plans tailored to the local dynamics will be meticulously crafted by representatives of both Associations working alongside Circle Functionaries at LHO levels in the near future. These actionable plans, born from the Circle level deliberations, will be thoughtfully shared in "**Staff Contact Programs**" with all staff members at RBO centres. This approach ensures a clear understanding and actively encourages the participation of each and every member of SBI family in the successful implementation of these initiatives.

Together, we embark on a journey of progress and excellence, driven by our collective dedication and the wisdom of productivity principles. In this endeavour, we can draw inspiration from the principles of productivity outlined in Charles Duhigg's book, "**Smarter, Faster, Better.**" By applying these insights to our operations, we can further enhance our business growth and solidify our position as a global financial powerhouse.

Unlocking the Potential

SBI's vast workforce and extensive reach present a goldmine of untapped potential. Our employees possess immense capabilities waiting to be harnessed. By providing them with the right tools, training, supportive environment and motivation, we can unlock this potential to drive innovation and efficiency across the organization.

Motivation: The Driving Force

Motivated employees are the backbone of any successful organization. The motivation can be developed and strengthened over time. Our Bank can implement strategies to empower its workforce, allowing them to take control of their work and decision-making processes. When employees feel motivated and in charge of their roles, their commitment to SBI's mission deepens, resulting in higher productivity and exceptional customer service.

Setting SMART Goals for Growth

The SMART goal framework is a widely recognized approach that emphasizes setting goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. Specific goals leave no room for ambiguity and provide a precise direction for action. Measurable goals allow to track progress and evaluate performance effectively. Setting achievable goals ensures that employees have a realistic chance of success. Moreover, it's essential for the controllers to strike a delicate balance between defining ambitious goals and verifying their attainability within the available resources and limitations. This approach not only enhances employee engagement but also aligns individual and team efforts with the bank's overall mission and strategic priorities. It nurtures a culture of responsibility and continuous improvement, where everyone understands their role in contributing to SBI's growth and expansion. Subsequently, SBI can navigate the path to success with precision and purpose, leveraging the power of SMART goals.

The Power of Collaborative Teams

The strength of our Bank lies in its cohesive and committed teams at various levels, all striving towards shared objectives. Embracing the concept of psychological safety and cultivating a culture of open two-way communication within these teams can be transformative. When employees feel secure in expressing their opinions, sharing innovative ideas, and collaborating without apprehension of criticism, our teams can evolve into dynamic engines of innovation and efficiency. In this collaborative atmosphere, the bank can harness the full potential of its teams, leading to more effective problem-solving and the accelerated success of multiple projects. When individuals are encouraged to contribute their perspectives and insights freely, our Bank can tap into a wealth of creativity and expertise that will undoubtedly contribute to its ongoing growth and prosperity.

Maintaining Focus for Progress

In the fast-paced and constantly changing

landscape of the banking industry, the ability to maintain unwavering focus is of utmost importance. Distractions, whether internal or external, can have significant consequences, including missed opportunities and reduced productivity. To navigate this environment successfully, Bank can derive substantial benefits from nurturing a culture that encourages its employees to visualize and meticulously plan each task. Visualizing tasks allows employees to mentally prepare for the challenges they may encounter, helping them to stay focused and agile. This reinforced level of preparedness will enable Bank to seize opportunities as they arise, respond effectively to changing circumstances, and ultimately enhance productivity and performance in a competitive banking landscape.

Fostering Innovation

In the swiftly evolving financial sector, our Bank recognizes that its commitment to innovation is a cornerstone of its continued success. Encouraging employees to embrace innovative thinking and pursue ambitious stretch goals can yield groundbreaking ideas and services that position SBI as a leader in the industry. By cultivating an environment that emphasizes ethical values and actively supports innovation, we empower our workforce to engage in creative thinking, explore uncharted territories, and pioneer positive changes. This approach not only sparks fresh ideas but also nurtures a culture of continuous improvement and adaptability. As a result, we will remain agile in a competitive financial landscape, consistently introducing innovative solutions that meet the evolving needs of its customers and staying ahead of industry trends.

Informed Decision-Making with Data

Data-driven decision-making lies at the core of the operational framework. The emphasis on the significance of data aligns seamlessly with SBI's reliance on data analysis to make informed and strategic decisions. By combining data-driven insights with instinct, we can craft more robust and forward-thinking strategies, thereby

SUCCESS AWAITS AT THE DOOR WHERE DILIGENCE IS

ensuring sustained success in an ever-evolving financial landscape.

Promoting a Supportive Environment

Promoting a supportive environment and adopting a holistic approach to harmonize the well-being of our human resources is paramount. Enhancing the responsiveness and transparency of the grievance redressal system is essential to ensure that everyone within SBI feels valued, heard, and secure. Recognizing the significance of each individual is a potent motivator that drives our collective pursuit of excellence. Furthermore, we must acknowledge the pivotal role that teams play in achieving productivity. It goes beyond collective skills; it's about fostering psychological safety, providing clarity, and assuring everyone that their voice matters. A culture characterized by trust, respect, and open communication empowers

employees not only to give their best at work but also to strike a harmonious balance between their professional and personal lives.

In conclusion, the principles outlined in “**Smarter, Faster, Better**” offer valuable insights that can propel our business growth to unprecedented heights. By unlocking the potential of its employees, cultivating motivation, setting clear goals, nurturing teamwork, maintaining focus, fostering innovation, embracing data, and creating a supportive atmosphere, SBI can continue its journey of excellence and global prominence. Just as individuals have the potential to be exceptionally productive, SBI, as an institution, has boundless potential for growth and success. Our esteemed organisation can continue to shine as a beacon of excellence and innovation in the global financial landscape, leaving an indelible mark on the industry for years to come.■

CAREER DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM (CDS) JOINT CUSTODIANS: ALLOTMENT OF KRAs

Text of AISBOF Letter No.6180/06/24 Dated 05.01.2024 addressed to the Dy. Managing Director (HR) & Corporate Development Officer, State Bank of India, Mumbai-400 021.

In a recent Executive Committee meeting of the All India State Bank Officers' Federation, we delved deeply into the pressing issue concerning our joint custodians, specifically regarding penalties imposed in contravention of the Bank's established procedures. This concern has been extensively discussed in CNC meetings as well. Recognizing the gravity of this matter, a committee has been constituted by the Corporate Centre to scrutinize these occurrences in detail and develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) aimed at protecting the interests of our officers serving as joint custodians.

2. It was highlighted during the Executive Committee discussions that, apart from penalties, joint custodians are being saddled with numerous additional responsibilities within their KRAs under the CDS. It is disconcerting to note that their performance assessments are primarily

influenced by these supplementary duties, thereby impeding their career advancement. This practice not only contravenes RBI directives but also strays from the well-defined guidelines set forth by our esteemed institution.

3. In this connection, we draw your attention to the Bank's letter No. R&DB/ABD/PY/121 dated 22.06.2022, where it is explicitly stated under para (iii) that: ***“The Joint Custodians should not be assigned any work other than currency chest management.”*** It is important to note that the RBI has imposed penalties in several circles for non-compliance of directives. Disturbingly, these penalties are being unfairly recovered from the joint custodians by debiting their accounts, by passing the Bank's procedural norms.

4. Given these concerns, we urge you to promptly address this serious concern and issue appropriate directives to ensure adherence to RBI and Bank guidelines in the allotment of KRAs under the CDS for maintaining the integrity of our system and safeguarding our officers' interests.■

ADDRESSING CONCERNS OF IT OFFICERS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS

Text of AISBOF Letter No.6180/07/24 Dated 06.01.2024, Addressed to the Dy. Managing Director (HR) & Corporate Development Officer State Bank of India, Mumbai-400 021.

We are writing to highlight a matter of utmost importance concerning the IT Officers in our esteemed organization. As you are aware, IT officials play a vital role in managing the crucial IT infrastructure of our bank, and their satisfaction and career progression are paramount to the continued success of our institution.

2. In this connection, we would like to outline some concerns along with suggestions that can help us align our promotion policy and manpower planning with the aspirations, talent, and interests of our IT Officers, as well as the best interests of our organization.

➔ **Manpower Planning of IT Officers:** Specialist manpower is an asset for any organization, and it is essential to align their skills with appropriate tasks and projects. Currently, the absence of a Manpower Planning Policy for IT Officers has resulted in the misutilization of their skills. We propose a job family based MPP that categorizes IT Officers into three grades (Junior & middle management, Senior Management, and Executive Management) to ensure proper utilization and specialization in areas like development, operations, infrastructure, and security. This will enhance productivity and job satisfaction among our IT Officers, ultimately benefiting the organization.

➔ **Career Growth Opportunities:** Considering the banking industry's ever-growing reliance on technology and information systems, the role of IT Officers has become increasingly pivotal. These professionals are entrusted with the task of not only maintaining but also enhancing the technological infrastructure that underpins our banking operations. Their responsibilities encompass a wide array of tasks, from ensuring the security of our digital assets to implementing innovative solutions that streamline our processes. Their expertise and dedication have been instrumental in maintaining the stability and efficiency of our IT infrastructure.

However, the absence of clear career growth prospects, recognition of their extensive knowledge, and equitable benefits have led to mounting frustration within this talented group of professionals. To counter this frustration and retain our valuable IT Officers, it is imperative that we offer them a well-defined path for advancement. By extending career growth opportunities up to DMD level, we not only acknowledge their in-depth knowledge but also incentivize their continued commitment to our organization. This approach will not only benefit our IT Officers by providing them with a clear trajectory for career advancement but will also bolster our bank's technological capabilities.

➔ **Lateral Entry of IT Officers:** One glaring issue we've observed is that the lateral entries is diminishing career opportunities for our highly competent officers, resulting in a significant brain drain. While we recognize the occasional need for such entries to meet project-specific requirements, it is imperative that we proceed judiciously in this matter. We propose a policy that discourages lateral entry of IT Officers above Scale-II, except in situations where it is absolutely unavoidable. However, when such instances do arise, we strongly recommend that these lateral entries be executed on a contractual basis for a maximum period of 3 years. The primary focus of these contracts should be the transfer of knowledge and expertise to our internal IT resources, ensuring their long-term growth and support.

➔ **Geographic Considerations:** At present, we are facing a situation where a significant portion of our IT Officers is primarily stationed at the GITC. This concentration has inadvertently led to a lack of exposure of branches, RBOs, ZBOs, or LHOs, impacting their overall experience and growth potential. In response to these circumstances, we recommend the establishment of at least one GOC in each circle reporting to GITC. This proactive step will provide our IT Officers with the essential exposure and experience of various geographical areas, branches, and offices within their respective circles.

WORK IS WORSHIP , DO YOUR DUTY

This arrangement will not only synergize development and operations but also resolve constraints related to location.

➔ **Equity in Increments:** To ensure fairness and parity, we strongly recommend granting four additional increments to all IT Officers upon joining, a practice akin to that of POs/TOs. It is noteworthy that the bank has recognized the IT capabilities of Clerical Staff with Computer Science degrees, introducing the TO Systems promotion channel, which also receives four additional increments. We propose a rationalization that extends the same benefit of four additional increments to all IT Officers upon their commencement with the bank. This approach aligns with our commitment to equity and

recognizes the vital contributions of our IT professionals.

➔ **Strategic Transfers:** By placing IT Officers at various levels where their technical expertise can directly or indirectly influence process improvement, innovation, and digital transformation, we ensure their contributions are maximized. This alignment is a win-win situation, benefiting both the bank and the IT Officers.

We believe that implementing these measures will not only address the concerns of our IT Officers but also contribute to the overall success of our organization in this increasingly technology-driven era. ■

CONCERNS REGARDING OFFICIATING ALLOWANCE AND 5-in-1

Text of AISBOF Letter No.6523/13/24 Dated, 29.01.2024, Addressed to the Chief General Manager (HR), State Bank of India, Mumbai-400 021

It has come to our notice that the bank has initiated the process of recovering amounts from certain officers who had claimed the benefits of the 5-in-1 scheme while officiating in higher scales. The premise for this recovery appears to be the conclusion that officers who had not received officiating allowance in salary payments for their officiating roles in higher scales are not eligible for the benefits under the 5-in-1 scheme, and any amounts paid to them should be recovered.

2. In this connection, we believe it is crucial to bring certain facts to your kind attention, which differ from the conclusions drawn in this matter:

► Many Scale I officers are entrusted with the responsibilities of branch heads in Scale II branches, where they operate single-handedly, managing critical branch functions and officiating roles in higher scales.

► Several Scale I officers serve as cash officers in currency chest branches, a role typically designated for Scale II officers.

► Some officers are assigned to Regional Business Offices (RBOs) with the responsibilities and workload associated with Scale II officers, despite the absence of manpower provisions for positions below MMGS II in RBOs.

3. These assignments and postings have been made by the competent authorities. Consequently, we believe that the allowance for officiating in higher scales, if not paid to eligible officers, should be disbursed in accordance with the existing norms, rather than initiating recovery from the salary accounts of officers who were genuinely entitled to officiating allowances and higher perquisites.

4. Furthermore, we kindly request the implementation of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the approval of officiating allowances to streamline the process and prevent unnecessary delays.

5. We sincerely urge you to review this matter and issue suitable directives to the circles. Your intervention in this issue will not only ensure fairness and justice for the affected officers but also contribute to a more transparent and efficient administrative process within the bank. ■

STAFF: MISCELLANEOUS

(A) Individual Housing Loan Scheme for Scheduled Tribe (ST) Employees

(B) Individual Housing Loan Scheme for SC/OBC Employees in CNT Areas

Text of AISBOF Letter No. 6528/16/24 Dated 29.01.2024, Addressed to the Deputy Managing Director (HR) and Corporate Development Officer, Corporate Center, State Bank of India, Mumbai-400 021.

We most humbly bring to your kind attention a matter of significant importance - the Individual Housing Loan Schemes for i) Scheduled Tribe (ST) Employees, and ii) Scheduled Cast/Other Backward Class (SC/OBC) employees in notified areas under the Chotta Nagpur Tenancy (CNT) Act' 1908.

2. The history of this scheme reveals that it was not initially available to the employees of the Bank in Notified areas where there is a restriction on the transfer of land and charge through mortgage of the property. It was only through persistent efforts that this facility was extended to these officers, albeit with certain conditions.

3. Our bank has long championed the cause of providing affordable housing solutions to our valued employees from the SC/ST community in accordance with the IHLSTE scheme. This scheme has been a beacon of hope, offering financial assistance for housing needs with maximum loan limits of ₹ 22 lakhs for sub-staff, ₹ 30 lakhs for clerical staff, and ₹ 45 lakhs for officers. However, the last revision of these limits occurred in the year 2021.

4. While these loan limits have indeed served as a

commendable framework, the changing economic landscape and real estate market trends demand a re-evaluation. The cost of real estate has seen a significant upswing in recent times, posing a considerable challenge to our SC/ST employees in their quest to acquire suitable housing in Jharkhand State.

5. Furthermore, the income levels of our employees have also witnessed a substantial increase since the last revision in the loan limits in 2021. Anticipating further income growth during the upcoming wage revision, we find it imperative to address the financial constraints faced by our SC/ST employees.

6. A substantial improvement in these limits is the need of the hour, aiming to better align the loan amounts with the increased cost of real estate and the elevated aspirations of our employees, given their improved income levels. After the recent enhancement in loan limits and other improvements in IHLS for staff, there has been a demand from the members for corresponding enhancement under IHLSTE and IHL for SC/OBC schemes also.

7. We firmly believe that your intervention and support in championing this cause will not only benefit our valued employees but will also contribute significantly to nourish a more inclusive and equitable work environment in our organization. Your leadership in this matter would be greatly appreciated. ■

ONE-TIME CLEARANCE OF INTER CIRCLE TRANSFER APPLICATIONS FOR eAB OFFICERS

Text of AISBOF Letter No. 6453/17/24 Dated 30.01.2024, Addressed to the Deputy Managing Director (HR) and Corporate Development Officer, Corporate Center, State Bank of India, Mumbai-400 021

We would like to bring to your attention the growing concerns of our membership regarding the long-pending Inter Circle Transfer (ICT) applications of eAB (erstwhile Associate Bank) officers.

During a recent visit to Bangalore, a delegation of eAB officers had the opportunity to discuss their

concerns and grievances with us. The following key points summarize the issues raised by them:

- a) The merger of Associate Banks occurred on 01.04.2017. During the ICT exercise in 2021, the bank successfully cleared all applications registered before 01.04.2017, thereby addressing all pending transfer applications of State Bank of India officers (excluding eAB Officers).
- b) The bank collected transfer options from eAB officers during the merger process, based

BE TRUTHFUL, BE FEARLESS

on which their preferences were recorded, and a common seniority number was allotted to eAB officers with applications dated 01.04.2017.

- c) The former Chairman of the Bank, Smt. Arundhati Bhattacharya, emphasized during the first press conference held after the merger on 03.04.2017 that the bank had opened a portal for employees to submit transfer options. Nearly 15,000 employees provided transfer options, and it was assured to make every effort to accommodate those requests.
- d) Currently, there are approximately 300 pending applications, specifically concerning officers in Scale 1 to 3, across all circles in the ICT portal. Notably, 100 of these applications are from the Bangalore Circle, all dated 01.04.2017, and the majority pertain to eAB officers.
- e) Several officers have been serving in their present circles for many years, with some originally selected in their native states and transferred to other states for assignments or repatriation replacements. They have been eagerly awaiting their transfers since 2017, with the hope of a resolution in the

year 2022 and 2023. However, they were left disappointed when their names were not considered in the transfer exercise during those years.

- f) The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on our officers and their families. Some officers lost their parents in their native states during this period, and they were unable to reach their homes in time due to the pandemic-related restrictions.
- g) Regrettably, after the release of ICT lists for 2022 and 2023, resentment grew among eAB officers, as they felt that the bank was discriminating against them or treating them unfairly by not granting ICT.

In light of the above, we earnestly request a one-time clearance of all pending applications dated 01.04.2017. This action will not only boost the morale of these officers but also demonstrate our commitment to equitable treatment.

We believe that addressing this long-pending issue will go a long way in alleviating the concerns of our eAB officers. We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your favorable response. ■

THE 58TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, SBIOA (BENGAL CIRCLE) A MASSIVE SHOW OF STRENGTH & SOLIDARITY

On 12th January 2024, Nazrul Manch in Kolkata witnessed the gathering of over 5000 officers from SBIOA (Bengal Circle) as they converged from every corner of the Circle, encompassing West Bengal, Andaman Nicobar, and Sikkim, to participate in the 58th Annual General Meeting. The stage for this momentous occasion was christened as the "Comrade L V Subramaniam Manch," and the theme for the Annual General Meeting resonated with the spirit of unity - **"Together We Can."**

2. The event commenced with the unfurling of the Association flag and the offering of floral tributes to two eminent figures - Swami Vivekananda on his 161st birthday and Kabi Nazrul Islam on his 125th Birth Anniversary. This honor was bestowed upon them by Shri Prem Anup Sinha, CGM, Kolkata Circle, Comrade A Sai Prasad, Chairman, AISBOF, Comrade Asitava Kundu, and Comrade Shubhajyoti Chattopadhyay, President, and General Secretary



respectively of the Circle Association. They were joined by leaders from other Circles, General Managers, Deputy General Managers of Kolkata Circle, and the undersigned.

3. The ambiance was electrified with resounding

OUR LIFE IS WHAT OUR THOUGHTS MAKE IT

slogans as the Circle activists extended a warm welcome to all members and distinguished guests. The occasion was further enriched by a captivating welcome video, centered around the theme "Together We Can." Following this, the air was filled with the melodious and invigorating tunes of opening songs, skilfully performed by the talented members of "Srijan," the cultural wing of the Circle Association.

4. Comrade Samrat Kundu and Comrade Mouli Das, two young activists of the Circle Association, who anchored the Opening Session, welcomed Comrade Asitava Kundu and Comrade Shubhajyoti Chattopadhyay, President, and General Secretary of the Circle Association, respectively, on the dais amidst thunderous slogans and applause. Both the leaders welcomed the dignitaries on the dais with utorio and sapling. The dignitaries on the dais were the undersigned along with Shri Prem Anup Sinha, Chief General Manager, Kolkata Circle, Comrade A Sai Prasad, Chairman of AISBOF, Shri Sunil Kumar Singh, General Manager of NW-I Kolkata, Shri Sujay Kumar Yadav, General Manager of NW-II Kolkata, Shri Rajesh R Yennemadi, General Manager (IA) of CAO Kolkata, Comrade Abhoy Deo Sharma, President of SBISA (Bengal Circle), Comrade Sudip Dutta, General Secretary of SBISA (Bengal Circle), Comrade Ashoke Kumar Datta, President of SBI Pensioner Association (Bengal Circle), and Comrade Dipak Kumar Basu, General Secretary of Federation of SBI Pensioners' Association & SBIPA (Bengal Circle).

The office bearers of the other Circle Associations whose presence made the occasion special were:

Comrade Nilesh Radia	President	Ahmedabad
Comrade Ranjan Karan	General Secretary	
Comrade G Kishore Kumar	President	Amravati
Comrade C Surya Kumar	General Secretary	
Comrade Biju T	President	Kerala
Comrade T A P Paul	President	North East
Comrade Anil Kumar Gautam	President	Lucknow
Comrade Rajeev Singh Sengar	General Secretary	
Comrade Udaram Hedao	President	Maharashtra
Comrade Amitava Das	President	Bhubaneswar
Comrade Arun Kumar Bishoyi	General Secretary	
Comrade Sushil Ahuja	General Secretary	Delhi
Comrade S Appa Swamy	President	Hyderabad
Comrade Vinay K Bhalla	General Secretary	Jaipur
Comrade Kamalakar Singh	President	Patna
Comrade Padmakar Sunil Talvadekar	President	Mumbai Metro

5. Following the ceremonial lamp lighting by our esteemed guests, we took a moment to recognize and felicitate individuals who have made outstanding contributions in various spheres:



- Comrade Asit Sinha, a senior member of SBIOA and the founder of "Bandhur Sparsha," a home for specially-abled children, was honored for his remarkable dedication to our society.
- Comrade Amal Kumar Chakraborty and Comrade Gautam Kumar Dutta, both SBIOA seniors, received well-deserved accolades for their invaluable contributions to the efficient functioning of the defense cell within the Circle Association.
- The dynamic Defense Representatives of the Circle Association were also acknowledged and felicitated in appreciation of their significant contributions to our membership.
- Comrade Sudhansu Mukherjee, another SBIOA senior and the Secretary of SBIOA Multi-State Co-operative Credit Society Ltd., was recognized for his decade-long dedication in effectively managing the society.
- Comrade Sisir Ranjan Ghosh, an SBIOA senior, was honored for his unwavering commitment to assisting our members in medical emergencies, providing support 365 days a year.
- Comrade Pronab Sarkar, a senior member of SBIOA, received recognition for his substantial efforts in compiling and promptly publishing the Diary of the Circle Association.
- Finally, the team responsible for publishing the weekly Empowerment Series, a gist of e-circulars

LET US BUILD A STRONG AND SELF RELIANT INDIA

published every weekend, was also felicitated.

These individuals and teams have exemplified the spirit of our association through their selfless service and commitment to our collective goals. We extend our heartfelt gratitude and admiration for their exceptional contributions.

6. On the occasion, a special edition of the in-house magazine of the Circle Association, namely **"SUP-VOICE,"** was released by the dignitaries.

7. Comrade Shubhajyoti Chattopadhyay, General Secretary of SBIOA (Bengal Circle), in his address, welcomed all the dignitaries and militant members to the meeting. He narrated some of the initiatives taken by the Circle Association to keep the members updated and to provide required protection to the officers, which included training programs under "Byatikramee Pathakram" an alternate curriculum, on SME & P-Segment advances, workshops for Joint Custodians in Currency Chest branches, program for Service Managers, program on RFIA, Preventive Vigilance, where Circle CGM attended as a faculty, publication of recent Bank's Circulars on weekly basis. He briefly touched upon the major activities, viz. Face to Face programs and achievements of the Circle Association, and highlighted the various issues taken up during the Circle Negotiating Committee meetings. He also highlighted that the Circle leadership had conducted programs connecting people from different walks of life in society, such as Raksha Bandhan, Photography Exhibition involving customers, etc. He concluded his welcome address by briefly explaining the significance of the tagline of the 58th AGM, **"Together We Can"**, and wished that 2024 would usher in joy and togetherness among the officers of the entire banking fraternity.

8. In inaugural address, the undersigned extended heartfelt congratulations to SBIOA (Bengal Circle) for orchestrating a highly successful gathering, which was a testament to the unwavering dedication and commitment of members. I took a moment to pay tribute to two great figures - Swami Vivekananda, on his 161st birth anniversary, and the stalwart of the banking trade union movement, Late Comrade L V Subramaniam, for their invaluable contributions. I also commended



Kolkata Circle for their multitude of activities aimed at the welfare of our membership. These include defense initiatives, medical support, Byatikramee Pathakram, the empowerment series, and Face to Face programs. On the front of wage negotiations, the undersigned highlighted the rapid progress made, with the final round of discussions held on the very day of the meeting, preceding the signing of the 9th Joint Note. This time, we anticipate a fair wage settlement, considering that the payslip component's cost for the banks is projected to be approximately ₹ 12,449 crores, factoring in the appropriate merger of DA and a 3% load factor. The members greeted the optimistic news of the long-awaited 5-day workweek for banks with resounding enthusiasm and applause, anticipating its announcement during the final signing of the wage settlements. Regarding the 50% pension issue, the Hon'ble High Court Delhi directed the Department of Financial Services (DFS) to establish a committee to address this long pending issue. The committee had the privilege of receiving presentations from both the Bank and the Federation of SBI Pensioners' Association. In addition, our delegation, including Comrade G D Nadaf, former General Secretary of AISBOF, Comrade A Sai Prasad, Chairman AISBOF, Comrade Rupam Roy, President AISBOF, and myself, had the opportunity to make presentations before the committee. These presentations garnered widespread appreciation for their thoroughness and dedication. Our chairman of the Bank Sh. Dinesh Khara ji also played a pivotal and positive role. It is with immense pride that we announce that the collective endeavours of the SBI family have resulted in the achievement of uniform payouts, ensuring that all SBI pensioners now receive 50% of their last drawn basic pay. This achievement rectifies the previous

disparity between 40% and 50% pensions, marking a significant milestone in the pursuit of equity and justice for our esteemed pensioners. The house was also appraised by the undersigned that the issue of foreign travel by officers was under scrutiny at the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, and there will be no recoveries from officers till the decision in the case. Discussions regarding pay disparity for officers were actively underway within the top management and were expected to yield positive outcomes soon. A committee is actively working on the matter of penalties imposed on Joint Custodians in case of RBI penalties, with a report expected to be submitted to the management by March 2024. We also achieved improvements in individual housing loan limits, furniture & fixtures, and introduced Travel Fare Allowance (TFA) in lieu of Leave Fare Concession (LFC) for officers.

9. The undersigned expressed gratitude to our Bank's Chairman for convening the Synergy Meet "LEAP" in Kolkata in December 2023, after a gap of 17 years. This gathering paved the way for future action plans to steer the Bank forward, with the active involvement of both federations. Our presentations during the event emphasized the significance of the well-being of staff and officers in the Bank. We underscored the importance of transparent feedback from ground-level functionaries to the top management. We also highlighted the unrealistic targets and excessive work pressure imposed on officers working at the frontline in branches and CPCs. The rampant calling of officers on Sundays and holidays was affecting their morale and work-life balance. Consequently, we urged the top management to establish a proper mechanism to address this issue. In alignment with the Synergy Meet, the "Staff Connect Program," would be conducted at all levels in the Bank, from RBO to AO to LHO levels. There is an urgent need for employees to refrain from making derogatory or defamatory comments about our institution on social media platforms and use internal platforms and associations for their grievance redressal. Our collective efforts have been acknowledged for contributing to SBI's record-breaking profits, which led to our esteemed Chairman being recognized as the "Indian of the Year" in the Business category by CNN News 18.

10. Shri Prem Anup Sinha, CGM, Kolkata Circle, and the chief guest of the meeting expressed his amazement at the sheer number of members who attended the meeting. He appreciated the Circle leadership for undertaking many activities such as

Blood Donation Camps, Educational training, and bringing out many Circulars and Handbooks. He thanked the entire banking fraternity, due to which the Chairman was awarded the "Indian of the Year" by CNN in business category. He also thanked the officers of Kolkata Circle for keeping the flag of the Circle high. He stated that Kolkata Circle ranked first in the audit program in PPF by the CENMAC. Post the Synergy Meet, named LEAP, a program had been launched by the Bank which aimed to achieve ₹ 64,000 crore profit by 2024 and ₹1,00,000 crore by 2025. He urged improvement in risk tolerance areas and customer complaints by the Circle. He expressed his concern regarding the slow increase in Deposit business by the Circle. Bank launched a new training program for the frontline staff called "Punarvinyas". He urged upon all employees to adopt appropriate email and messaging etiquette and educate customers about the increasing cyber frauds. Appreciating the dedication of the employees of the Circle, he requested the employees to walk the extra mile during the last quarter of the current fiscal year to achieve the goals set by the Bank. He conveyed his best wishes to the Circle Association for arranging such a successful program.

11. Comrade A Sai Prasad in his maiden speech to the audience as Chairman, AISBOF, congratulated the circle leadership for the overwhelming attendance in the meeting. He shared that this is going to be the fastest wage settlement in banking history, that too without any agitation or strike. He stressed upon the need to maintain work-life balance at any cost and the importance of a healthy body and mind. He concluded by congratulating SBIOA (Bengal Circle) for the successful organization of the 58th Annual General Meeting.

12. Comrade Sudip Dutta, General Secretary of SBISA (Bengal Circle), expressed his happiness that both organizations were working together for the betterment of all employees and officers. He stated that the full details of the wage negotiations would be put forward by the apex leadership for perusal by the members in due course. The continued struggle by both federations had been instrumental in keeping our Bank out of the clutches of privatization to date. SBI paid ₹14,000 crores in dividends to the Government during the last financial year. He thanked all the affiliates and unions for the united efforts in securing a favorable wage revision.

NEVER BEND BEFORE THE INSOLENT MIGHT



by wishing the 58th Annual General Meeting of SBIOA (Bengal Circle) a grand success.

14. The Opening Session concluded by conveying thanks and gratitude to the leadership and dignitaries by Comrade Asitava Kundu, President, SBIOA (Bengal Circle).

15. Comrades, the 58th Annual General Meeting held in Kolkata was yet another remarkable display of the strength and solidarity inherent in supervisory trade unionism. The overwhelming gathering of over 5000 members vividly showcased the depth of unity, solidarity and commitment level of members.

13. Comrade Dipak Kumar Basu, General Secretary, Federation of SBI Pensioners Association and SBIPA (Bengal Circle) congratulated the anchors of the meeting, the team **"Srijan"** for their exemplary presentation. He paid his tribute to Comrade L V Subramaniam and requested the present leadership of the Federation and Confederation to take care of the issues of the retirees. He concluded

We are truly delighted to have had the opportunity to engage directly with members at the grassroots level, aiming to cultivate a strong bond that will nurture and perpetuate the principles of trade unionism and its legacy. This unity serves the common good, benefiting not only the officers' fraternity but also the broader working class and our esteemed bank. ■

170TH PROGRAM BY NATURE WORKSHOP ON DISCIPLINARY AND VIGILANCE PROCEEDINGS FOR ALL INDIA REGIONAL RURAL BANK OFFICERS FEDERATION HELD FROM 19TH TO 20TH AT KOLKATA.

The 'NATURE' has been conducting various programs on Disciplinary and Vigilance Proceedings since 1991 at various locations across the country, not only for our bank but for officers at all banks.

The 170th workshop of NATURE on Disciplinary and Vigilance Proceedings was held at Kolkata on 19th and 20th January 2024 exclusively for the officers of the All India Regional Rural Bank Officers Federation (AIRRBOF). The program was inaugurated by the General Secretary of the AIRRBOF, Com. Srijan Pal. The Joint General Secretary of AIRRBOF Com. Samiran Biswas also graced the occasion. 35 participants from across the country participated in the workshop. The workshop was very interactive and the feedback

received from the participants was extremely encouraging and positive.

Com. A Sai Prasad, Chairman AISBOF and General Secretary, SBIOA(Hyderabad Circle), Com. Appa Swamy, President SBIOA (Hyderabad Circle) Com. G.D. Nadaf, former General Secretary of AISBOF and AIBOC, Com. Y. Sudarshan former General Secretary, AISBOF, former President AIBOC and Com. D. Shyam Sunder Rao former President SBIOA(K) Bangalore Circle, were the faculties for the programme.

The valediction was held on the 20th evening. The Senior Vice-President of AIRRBOF Com. Debasish Mohapatra graced the occasion.

TIME AND TIDE WAIT FOR NONE

OFFICERS' CAUSE ENGLISH MONTHLY-RNI. NO.36617 / 81 TOTAL NO. OF PAGES 12 FEBRUARY - 2024
 REGN.NUMBER.KRNA/BGE/202/2024-2026 REGD. NUMBER.527/MDS PUBLISHED ON 10TH OF EVERY
 MONTH-POSTED AT BANGALURU PSO, MYSORE ROAD, BANGALURU - 560 026 POSTED ON 15TH OF
 EVERY MONTH-LICENSED TO POST WITHOUT PREPAYMENT. LICENCE NO. PMG BG/WPP/82 2024-2026

DEARNESS ALLOWANCE

The Index Numbers for the quarter ended December 2023 are as under:

DA Payable for the months - Feb 24 to Apr 24

Month	Index as per 2016 series	Conversion Factors	Index as per 1960 series
Oct.2023	138.40	4.63 X 4.93X2.88	9098.22
Nov.2023	139.10	4.63 X 4.93X2.88	9144.24
Dec.2023	138.80	4.63 X 4.93 X2.88	9124.52
	Total		27366.98
	Average	27366.98/3	9122.33
	Rounded off		9122.00
	Difference in excess of 6352 points		2770
	Number of Slabs		693
	D.A.paid for the previous quarter slabs		693
	Difference		0
	New DA Rate		48.51

Accordingly, Dearness Allowance is payable to Officers is 693 slabs with effect from 01.02.2024. The rates of Dearness Allowance at various stages of basic pay are furnished overleaf. The rates worked out are as per the industry level scales up to Scale VII including SBI.

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Printed, Edited and Published By Shri. Deepak Kumar Sharma on behalf of AISBOF at State Bank Building St.Mark's Road, Bangaluru-560001 and printed by Smt. Nithya Lakshmi, at L. V. Press 3916, 7th Cross, 4th Main, Gayathri Nagar, Bangaluru - 560 021