

**Editorial**  
Stay Healthy, Stay Safe

## **COVID - 19. WE ARE BACK**

**T**he country was locked down for more than 2 months due to the Corona attack which engulfed the entire nation bringing a grinding halt to the day to day activities. The whole country was under tremendous strain and stress during the month of March, April and May due to the spread of Corona virus in the country. The movement of the people, the transportation, the normal communication, the various industrial activities, the educational activities, the tourism, the recreation activities and all the social activities, to be precise the routine life of the country as a whole was locked down. The spread of virus was scary. The hospitals all over the country is filled with corona victims. The continuous feedback from the electronic and print media was scary. The Centre took full charge in order to reduce the impact of the epidemic. It declared lock down of the whole country in different stages. The day to day release of statistics of the Corona attack by the Government throughout the country spread panic among the people of the country. The whole world was watching as to how our country will handle the situation in view of huge population we have. The period of lockdown was a new experience to the people of the country. It was a nightmare to the millions and millions of people who are living below the poverty line. The social distancing, the wearing of masks, the using of sanitizers and maintaining hygienic atmosphere has now almost become a part of

our life. The working population in particular the migrant workers are suffering a lot. It is in this backdrop the Centre and State Governments have taken several measures for revival of the economy. The role of the banking industry will be very significant in this regard.

We are back after the lockdown, for our routine work. The country paid respect to the Corona warriors who had risked their lives and worked for the safety and security of the people of the country round the clock and were responsible in reducing devastating damage of the Corona attack. The people of the country paid rich tributes and respect to the health workers, the doctors, the nurses, the police forces, the Para military, the municipal authorities in particular, sweepers and scavengers, the domestic servants, the officials in the Centre and State Governments and so on so forth, the list is a long one. We also join in expressing our gratitude to each and every one who were responsible for the protection and safety of our people in the country

There is one more special category of employees and officers who have quietly discharged their responsibilities as Corona warriors in ensuring the banking services to the millions and millions of customers across the country. The spread of virus is scary. Despite the threat to their personal as well as the life of the members of

**NATION FIRST, ORGANISATION NEXT, INDIVIDUAL LAST**

their families, they attended the office as usual. They kept their services available to the general public, the Government, the Defense, the Revenue etc., so that the economic activity is kept alive without any disturbance although the country was completely locked down. The tremendous digital activity which was generated due to the lockdown was handled in an efficient manner by the bankers. While, most of the sectors had the advantage of working from home, the bankers had their own limitations, since it is a service industry where the contact with the customers on a day to day basis was most essential. The Branch Managers, the controllers at the Head Offices along with their staff ensured all precautions as per the directions of the medical authorities so that the customers are provided total security and safety while availing the banking services. The staff at our back offices in particular the IT officials accountable for the millions and millions of transactions at every minute were required to be present in their offices to protect the data of our banking transactions. There was no relief for them. They were required to be at the beck and call of the operating staff so that the banking transactions are uninterrupted.

The Banking fraternity was called upon to shoulder the responsibility of revival of the economic activities as per the directions of the Government authorities as well as the Reserve Bank of India. The series of measures announced by the Ministry of Finance at the Centre and the Reserve Bank of India required the bankers to burn the midnight oil so that the benefits are passed on to the people of the country, the customers, the borrowers etc., The relaxation in regard to the repayment of loans, the reworking of the repayment program extending the benefit of the moratorium etc., was a tremendous work for the entire banking industry which they took upon themselves as warriors fighting back against the attack of Corona on the economy of our country. The series of measures announced by the RBI in order to revive the economy was to be implemented by the bankers so that the economic activities are brought back to normal.

In order to help the common man the Government at the Centre as well as the States introduced

a series of benefits and cash payment to the poorer section of the society. The responsibility of disbursement of these benefits was on the shoulder of the bankers through millions of Jan Dan accounts. A number of schemes meant for providing cheaper credit to the borrowers in particular agriculture and small and medium enterprises was to be put through the bankers in an effective manner as expected by the Government at the Centre as well as the State. The banking industry took up the responsibility in an efficient manner.

At the Confederation, the Federation and Circle Associations, front we are always at the service of our members and continued to keep in touch with the rank and file across the country through various forms of communications. The physical movement was although curtailed, the Federation and Confederation ensured the contact with the authorities concerned both at the industry as well as the bank level to raise all the issues connected with our members. We are in day to day touch with the Corporate Centre in order to see that the issues related to our members are attended to on priority basis. We have already emphasized with the Management of State Bank of India about the role that our members have played during the crucial period of lockdown and the various measures that the bank has to consider to ease the difficulties that our members are facing while attending to the banking routine work. The Circle Associations have kept their offices open and all our leaders are available to the rank and file across the country to attend to their emergent requirement. The bigger task such as the re-opening of salary negotiations, the Central Negotiating Meeting at the Corporate Centre will resume either through video conference or through regular meetings at major centers where the transportation facilities are restored.

In the meanwhile, we extend a warm welcome to our President Com. Deepak Kumar Sharma, who was unanimously co-opted as new President of the Federation in the vacancy caused by Com. Sambit Mishra, our former President who retired on his superannuation on 31-05-2020.

**SUCCESS AWAITS AT THE DOOR WHERE DILIGENCE IS**

We take this opportunity to convey our gratitude to all our members for having demonstrated their commitment to the cause of the nation and taken care of the customers across the country despite the personal difficulties that they were encountering during this crucial period

and playing responsible role in the revival of the economy. We are back in the office as usual and let us resume our onward journey with greater commitment and conviction to take the banner of the Federation and Confederation to greater heights in the days to come. ■

## *Retirement*

### **COM. SAMBIT MISRA PRESIDENT, AISBOF DEMITS OFFICE**

Comrade Sambit Misra, President, All India State Bank Officers' Federation, who is also the Sr. Vice President of All India Bank Officers' Confederation (AIBOC) as well as the General Secretary of SBIOA Bhubaneswar Circle laid down his office today i.e. on 31.05.2020 on superannuation from Bank's service and with this, his illustrious journey in the trade Union movement in AISBOF, AIBOC and SBI Officers' Association, Bhubaneswar Circle comes to an end. He has demitted office at a critical juncture when the entire country is under lockdown following the outbreak of the pandemic and in the midst of an uncertain future. The road ahead will be full of challenges as each and every day throws up new challenges that we have to overcome. His departure in the midway of the current bipartite negotiation, where he had been playing a definitive role in shaping the negotiation, will be a great loss for the entire fraternity.



2. Com. Sambit Misra was born on 5th May 1960 at Banpur, Distt. Khurda, Odisha. His father Late Madan Mohan Mishra was an educationist, a great literary figure in Odisha and was the winner of the most prestigious "Sahitya Academy" award for his novel "Banhi Balaya". Com. Sambit Misra passed his Matriculation Examination from Godabarish Vidyapitha, Banpur and completed his Post Graduation in Analytical and Applied Economics in the year 1981 from Utkal University, one of the most prestigious universities of its kind in the country. Comrade Misra had an excellent academic career. He preferred to join our Bank as a Probationary Officer and started his illustrious career in banking on 2nd December 1984 in Odisha.

3. Since beginning of his career in Bank, he became the spokesperson of the officers' cause and dignity, raising his voice against injustice, discrimination and

favoritism. He showed his dexterity as a trade unionist foregoing the alluring career prospects in the bank. Identifying his prompt maturity in cadre and mettle, Com. Misra was proximately picked up by the then veteran leadership, none other than the legendary Com. N N Das, the founder of SBIOA, Bhubaneswar Circle, to the affairs of the leadership of SBI Officers' Association in the state. Starting his trade union career as Secretary of Bhubaneswar Main Branch unit, he was subsequently elected to the Zonal Committee, Bhubaneswar and was the unanimous choice for the Vice President of the Zonal Committee. In the year 2002, he was elected as a member to the Circle Executive Committee of SBIOA, Bhubaneswar Circle and from then there was no looking back. Thereafter, he was elevated to the post of the Organising Secretary of SBIOA, Bhubaneswar Circle in 2005. By virtue of his popularity and by dint of his calibre, he became the Dy. General Secretary of the Bhubaneswar Circle Committee on 1st April 2012 and just four months later he succeeded Com. Ganesh Chandra Mishra, the then legendary leader of SBIOA, Bhubaneswar Circle and became the General Secretary of State Bank of India Officers' Association, Bhubaneswar Circle. Com. Sambit Misra took over the baton at the most turbulent and blustery period in the history of the Federation. He was charge sheeted by the bank for taking part in a lunch time demonstration on 27th August, 2012 at the call of the Federation along with all the Presidents and General Secretaries of all circles. Ironically, he neither was the General Secretary nor the President of the Circle Association at the material point of time. Through his patience, astute leadership qualities and dexterous stewardship, he was able to steer the Association through that turbulent span of time braving all constraints and challenges. His positive and strategic thinking, vibrant leadership, respect for colleagues was a source of inspiration to all. He even accepted

**ARISE, AWAKE, STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED**

the 'punishment' inflicted upon him with grace and attributed the same as a just reward for a Trade Unionist. He commanded respect from one and all for his inherent qualities of straightforwardness, compassion for colleagues, who never compromised on ethics and principle and for his indomitable fighting spirit. As a mark of recognition and to honour his excellent leadership qualities, he was elevated as the Sr. Vice President and again unanimously elected as the President of the mighty All India State Bank of India Officers' Federation (AISBOF) on 01.05.2019. We are incredibly honoured and extremely privileged to have Com. Misra at the helm of affairs of the Federation. His uncompromising stand on matters of principles, unwavering stand against unreasonable and unjust policies of the Management was admired and appreciated by both the management functionaries as well as the comrades all over the country. With his innate ability and vision, he always endeavoured to keep SBIOA Bhubaneswar Circle, Federation and Confederation vibrant and spirited so as to combat any challenge.

4. He has put in great efforts in instilling values such as determination, tolerance, equity, patience, honesty and professional stewardship. His monumental contribution towards forward march of AISBOF is unparalleled. He is an embodiment of optimism and hard work. He is not only a brilliant and completely dedicated and committed leader, but he is an outstanding human being. He has brought inspirational leadership to AISBOF.

5. Com. Sambit Misra is gifted with excellent oratory skills and is an articulate speaker. A voracious reader, he is capable of speaking on any subject from Literature to History with élan. With his outstanding negotiation skill, command over data and facts and through logical articulation he was able to turn the table many a time to the advantage of the association bringing benefits and relief to thousands of officers in the banking industry. He also showed his professionalism of a true trade unionist, collective bargaining and superb negotiation skills, which helped to unlock difficult situations. He is a thorough gentleman and a great human being. A simple and humble person, endowed with all the rare qualities of an effective and efficient leader, and a caring personality devoted to the cause of officers endeared him to all.

6. Words can neither qualify nor quantify how helpful his guidance and advice has been effective in

resolving many critical situations during his tenure in different assignments in his long journey in the trade union horizon. We salute him for his vision, unmatched leadership, work ethic and especially his sense of humour and goodwill. We have and will continue to value his leadership and tireless commitment to our trade union movement, his advice and his unending support.

7. We take this opportunity to place on record our deepest appreciation for all the contribution made by Comrade Misra for building the edifice of a strong movement of officers in the state of Odisha which is worthy of emulation by one and all. We place on record his contribution and the values espoused by him while discharging his role as a trade union leader. Retirement marks the start of another chapter in one's life. We convey our best wishes on his retirement. May every moment of his life be fulfilling and full of joy. He will be missed, remembered and revered. His humility and graciousness have won our hearts. The legacy he has left will be remembered in the years to come. His perceptiveness as a trade union leader transcended all boundaries. The undersigned has been immensely benefited and received tremendous emotional support at difficult times. His towering presence at various meetings and his crisp and incisive deliberation has always been a morale booster. The guidance and his valued opinion on critical issues have helped tiding over many a crisis. The bonding and camaraderie have only grown stronger with each passing day.

8. Com. Misra was given an emotional and befitting farewell in a function held at Bhubaneswar on 27th May 2020. Although the congregation was kept limited due to the lockdown and social distancing to contain COVID-19 pandemic but all the officers of the Circle, irrespective of cadre, have sent passionate messages on the retirement of Com. Misra who remained in their hearts for the past so many years and will remain for ever. Our Federation would have definitely felt honoured to give a befitting farewell to Com. Misra in a grand manner had this pandemic not there. However, a unique 'meeting' was arranged on virtual platform on 29th May 2020, where the entire EC of the Federation joined to offer felicitations. Trade Union leaders from the entire banking fraternity from across the country who could not reach him in person have sent their messages for Com. Misra. We salute Com. Misra and extend our heartfelt tribute to one of the most



respected trade union leaders in the Banking Trade Union movement of the country. We also convey our deep sense of gratitude to his wife Smt. Sanhita Rath presently serving as Chief Manager at Bank of India Zonal Office, Bhubaneswar for the sacrifice she made to enable Com. Misra to fight for the cause of bank officers' fraternity as a foremost leader of AIBOC, the apex body of bank officers in the country.

9. We sincerely believe that Comrade Misra is just retiring from bank's service on superannuation and he is not quitting the battle field for the cause of the society in general and the members in particular. We

will feel extremely privileged to have his guidance in the forward march of AISBOF. The undersigned, in his individual capacity and on behalf of all the members of AISBOF, conveys sincere appreciation for his colossal contribution and urge upon him to continue his fight against injustice, for the cause of the common people and the members and extend his valuable guidance to the banking trade union movement.

*"Officers' Cause" wish Com.Sambit Misra, a very happy, healthy, contented, active and serene retired life. ■*

*Congratulations*

## **COM. DEEPAK KUMAR SHARMA TAKES OVER AS PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATION**

We are delighted to inform all our members that Com. Deepak Kumar Sharma, Senior Vice President of the Federation, who is also the General Secretary of SBI Officers' Association (Chandigarh Circle) has been elevated as the President of the Federation, in consonance with the succession plan adopted at the Triennial General Council of the Federation held at Chennai on 24th-26th June 2018. He is assuming the responsibility following superannuation of Com Sambit Misra from the Bank's service on 31st May 2020.



Secretary, Chandigarh Circle, President, Chandigarh Circle before taking over the position as it's General Secretary on 1st January, 2017. In the various capacities that he served the Circle Officers' Association, he showed his mettle as a true fearless trade unionist and displayed astute leadership qualities. By his down to earth approach and easy accessibility to the general members, he has proved himself as the most affable leader amongst the trade union fraternity. With his rich experience and in-depth knowledge, he

will be an invaluable asset to the Federation. He will usher in renewed zeal and enhanced dynamism with focus on the welfare of the membership being of core value.

2. Com. Deepak Kumar Sharma, who was holding the position of Senior Vice President of the Federation, is a veteran firebrand trade union leader with a long and rich experience in the trade union movement in the Bank. He has remained actively involved with the trade union movement ever since he joined the bank in Chandigarh Circle on 19th June 1985. He joined the Officers' cadre in November 1993 after his promotion in Specialist Cadre (systems) and rode the trade union movement like a colossus, always working for the betterment of the Officers' community, thinking of their wellbeing and visualizing the future challenges, working day and night, reading, writing and communicating in a most efficient manner. He served the Circle Officers' Association in various capacities viz. Asstt. Secretary, ZO Haryana Unit, Chairman ZO Shimla Unit, Zonal Treasurer HP Module, Dy. General

3. Com. Deepak Kumar Sharma was born on 16th November 1964 at Shimla. After completion of B.Sc. (Medical), he joined State Bank of India on 19th June 1985 as a clerk-cum-cashier in Chandigarh Circle. Later on, while in service of the Bank, he completed M.A. (Hindi). An ace Defence Counsel, Com Deepak Sharma is a gifted orator and can captivate and mesmerize any audience. A passionate Trade Unionist, Com Sharma is a fearless leader who is ready to sacrifice anything for the cause of the fraternity. His zeal, dedication, indomitable fighting spirit and commitment is worthy of emulation. His empathy for his colleagues and willingness to walk the extra mile for their cause has endeared him to the members. He truly is a mass leader, who will never compromise on ethics and principle.

**LET CUSTOMER SERVICE BE OUR MOTTO**

4. We are confident that under his capable leadership as the President of the Federation, the future of the Federation is in safe hands and he will continue to carry forward the rich legacy of this organization in scaling greater heights in

the days to come.

5. We take this opportunity on behalf of the Federation to extend our warm felicitation and wish him all success in his endeavor in the days to come. ■

## **COVID-19 – RELAXATIONS IN LOCKDOWN TRANSFER EXERCISE (IMT) FOR THE YEAR 2020-21 OUR CONCERNS AND SUGGESTIONS**

***Text of our letter NO.6466/45/20, Date. 01.06.2020, Addressed to The Deputy Managing Director (HR) & CDO, State Bank of India, Corporate Centre, Madame Cama Road, MUMBAI - 400 021.***

We invite your kind reference to our letter no.6466/34/20 dated 11.05.2020 (copy enclosed) and glad to advise that several of our concerns and suggestions were duly considered and addressed suitably.

02. The transfer exercise for officers in SMGS IV & V is nearing completion in all circles and the ICT orders are also being implemented, where officers are being transferred from one Circle to other Circles. Considering the relaxations in lockdown, the Circles were advised to relieve the officers under ICT (on request) between 30.05.2020 to 30.06.2020. Incidentally, the officers in SMGS IV & V posted to Corporate Centre were advised to get relieved before 12.06.2020.

03. The 'Unlock 1.0' has now given the freedom for inter-state and district movements. Train and Domestic Air services have resumed and the vehicular movement within the states has been made free of any restrictions. Also, we are expecting more relaxations in various other restrictions prevailing in the coming days especially that the hospitality sector has been accorded permission to open on 8th June 2020 onwards. However, we have been given to understand that the regular exercise of repatriation of officers of JMGS I, MMGS II & III to their place/centre of domicile has been stalled as per directions received from Corporate Centre. It may please be noted that, though transfer is an integral part of an officer's career, it has manifold impact on his/her personal and family life. Many of our officers, including a large number of lady officers are working at far off places leaving their family, kids and aged parents at their places of domicile with expectation of reunion with them after completion of their

present assignment/tenure. Many have been serving outside their home centre for 5/6 years. In fact, most have already finalised their plans for the movements, like admission for their children, transfer of their spouse etc. Abrupt cancellation of such an exercise at this juncture will imperil them and will cause deep angst and frustration particularly as people will feel discriminated.

04. We, therefore, propose that a 'Repatriation' based exercise should be implemented in all circles. The outflow and inflow can be suitably matched by the following:

- a) Posting of newly promoted JMG I officers in deficit Modules/Network
- b) Posting of confirmed Probationary/ Trainee Officers of 2018 batch
- c) Request transfers for mandatory RUSU postings
- d) Out of turn request transfers for repatriation for IMTs.

05. Sir, the decision to stall the IMT of Scale-I/II officers has caused deep rooted effect on the psyche of our personnel, who have been rendering yeoman service to protect the interest of bank as well as the nation, without the fear of contamination to themselves as well as family members. They are the real assets of our bank and a sympathetic consideration of according necessary permission to implement a repatriation based transfer exercise will come as a morale booster.

In view of the foregoing, we request you to take a call on this issue with a pragmatic and sympathetic approach and accord your approval to our considered suggestion, which will definitely be appreciated by the entire fraternity. ■

**BE TRUTHFUL, BE FEARLESS**

## **COVID-19 PROVISION FOR QUARANTINE FACILITY ENHANCEMENT OF PROTECTIVE COVER**

***Text of our letter No.6466/43/20, Dated: 26.05.2020, Addressed to The Deputy Managing Director (HR) & Corporate Development Officer, State Bank of India, Madame Cama Road, Mumbai- 400 021***

The Covid-19 pandemic has devastated lives and livelihoods across the world and the virus has been spreading its tentacles across the country. Number of fresh cases are surging to record highs with every passing day despite lockdown over two months and compliance of social distancing and isolation to contain outbreak of the virus. At least 16 States in the country have positive cases of over 1000. The situation in Mumbai/Maharashtra, Delhi, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Andhra Pradesh, Telengana, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh is alarming. The number of cases is poised to rise rapidly with the gradual relaxation as economic activities will commence. Domestic air services have commenced albeit in limited manner while passenger rail services is likely to start from 1st June'20, which invariably will lead to more number of people getting infected across the country.

2. Even under this daunting and grave situation, our employees and officers continue to work fearlessly, face and interact with customers. Amidst country wide lockdown since 24th March 2020 and strict maintenance of social distancing and isolation since outbreak of the virus, the 'Corona Warriors' have been extending exemplary services during this unprecedented situation everyday risking their lives and their family members of getting contaminated. We are in receipt of reports of growing number of fresh positive cases among the employees and officers across the country and there have been unfortunate deaths also.

3. Keeping in view the outbreak of Covid-19 in all the states unabated despite lockdown and social distancing, with number of positive cases increasing with a record high every day, the provision for requisite number of quarantine centres and medical centres at Metros and other state capitals and hotspots arranged by the respective state government is far from the requirement. Banking,

being the vertebral column of the financial infrastructure, there obviously cannot be any respite to banking personnel, and the officers/employees will have to shoulder the responsibility, albeit with the risk involved. Under such circumstances, we feel that our esteemed organisation, which is a pioneer in implementing avant garde HR initiatives, should also think of providing adequate and standard - medical and quarantine care to our officers and staff who have been working like soldiers. In this backdrop, we request you to consider provision of any one of the following alternatives for making them as temporary quarantine centres for the employees and the officers which will enable them to have hassle free access to quarantine centre in case of need.

- a. Tie-up with chain of hotels/guest houses for quarantine facilities at all important centres
- b. Using SBILD/Training Institute for quarantining officers and staff and their family, in case of need, in Metros and major centres as training programmes cannot be conducted now.

4. If Bank arranges such quarantine facility, it would not only lessen the pressure on public infrastructure, but would also demonstrate that the bank is concerned and sensitive to the needs of the officers and staff, which will be hailed by one and all.

5. We also request you to consider our earlier suggestion of enhancement of protective cover to employees and officers to the tune of Rs 50 lakh with retrospective effect. In fact, a public sector bank has already implemented such a welfare measure for its staff in recognition of their yeoman service in this trying times by way of insurance and ex-gratia payment.

In view of the foregoing, we would request you to take a call on this issue with a pragmatic approach and accord your approval to our above suggestion for the safety and benefits of the staff and officers and also their family members who are exposed to Covid-19 pandemic. ■

## **CORONAVIRUS – 19**

### **INTEREST FREE ADVANCE/LOAN**

***Text of our letter No.6466/42/20 , Dated: 26.05.2020, Addressed to The Deputy Managing Director (HR) & Corporate Development Officer, State Bank of India, Madame Cama Road Mumbai-400 021***

You are aware that the country has been facing an unprecedented crisis during the past two months due to outbreak of covid-19 which triggered nationwide lockdown and social distancing since 24th March 2020 extended upto 31st May 2020 and is likely to be extended further to contain outbreak of the dreaded coronavirus as no vaccine is available in the world and no respite is in sight in the near future. As the government is trying to strike a balance between lives and livelihood by resuming economic activities and the resumption of air and rail travel, the daily number of affected persons across the country is surging with record highs every day. The states with relatively smaller number of affected persons are also showing a sudden spike in numbers.

2. As the bank has been declared as the provider of essential services, the bank employees have been working untiringly since lockdown was enforced amidst the risk of contamination of themselves and their family members. It is heartening to note that bank has already initiated a slew of welfare and safety measures for the employees along with provision of special leave in some specified cases, payment of one day's salary for six days of working during the lockdown period, credit to the employees' account of Rs 1000/- towards cost of sanitizers, mask etc. which are avant garde HR initiatives on the part of the bank in this crisis.

3. Sir, you are also aware that with enforcement of lockdown, social distancing and isolation to contain outbreak of coronavirus, movement of goods and provision of services except some essential items have been strictly restricted even within the state. This has eventually pushed up the prices of both essential and non essential items in the market disproportionately due to limited supply as against growing demand for those items. While the employees and the family members are subjected to frequent sanitization and fumigation of themselves and their personal effects, their overall household and health care expenditure have, therefore, gone up sharply. There has been substantial increase in the regular travelling cost of the employees due to suspension of all types of public transport facilities which altogether caused financial hardship to the employees.

4. In view of the foregoing, we would request your good self to consider sympathetically the plight of the employees they are facing now due to Covid-19 pandemic and accord your approval for sanction of Rs One 1,00,000/- (Rupees One lakh) or one month of gross salary, whichever is more, to the employees as interest free loan/advances repayable in 36 monthly installments like facility for Festival Advance as onetime special case in this unprecedented situation so that the employees can cope with abnormal rise in expenditure of both essential and non-essential items and additional care for health.

We hope that our special proposal will be considered by the bank with a pragmatic approach and a favourable decision will be taken in this regard.■

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### **COVID-19: TRANSFER EXERCISE- 2020**

#### **RELIEVING OF OFFICERS (INCLUDING PO/TOs)**

***Text of our letter No.6466/40/20 , Dated, 21.05.2020, Addressed to The Deputy Managing Director (HR) & Corporate Development Officer, State Bank of India, Madame Cama Road Mumbai- 400 021***

You are aware that the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented disruption to the economic activity in the country and daily life and

activity of the people have virtually come to a standstill due to social distancing ever since the lockdown was enforced in the country since 24.03.2020 which has been extended upto 31.05.2020 for the fourth time to contain outbreak of the virus although no respite from the spread of the dreaded virus is in sight. The logistics, movement of people, across the country has been affected beyond imagination of the people. All types of public transport facilities have been withdrawn

**LET US BUILD A STRONG AND SELF RELIANT INDIA**



since enforcement of lockdown. While Rail services are expected to commence limited operations from 1st June onwards, domestic Air travel is expected to commence from 25th May 2020 in a calibrated manner. However, it will take a long time to restore normal services. In few states, permission of limited movement of private and public vehicles has been accorded with strict compliance of social distancing. However, by and large, inter-state/inter-district travel has become extremely difficult due to many restrictions imposed by states.

2. Incidentally, the spread of Covid-19 has led to many parts of the country into red/containment and hotspots zones eventually forcing the local administration to seal off those areas promptly to arrest community contamination in consonance with the advisories of Ministry of Home Affairs. With each passing day, there is a surge in numbers of people affected with the virus taking its toll every day with a record high. Restoration of normalcy may take several months, if not years, till a vaccine is discovered and made available for the populace to halt the community spread.

3. We sincerely express our gratitude to the management for initiating several avant-garde HR initiatives which speaks volume that bank is very sensitive to the needs and aspirations of its employees, for the welfare and protection of the employees who are extending yeomen service to the customers amidst lockdown and social distancing risking their life of getting contaminated of coronavirus of themselves and their family members.

4. Sir, it has come to our notice very recently that transfer orders in many Circles (including those of POs/TOs) have been issued and the relieving date has been set to be 22nd May, 2020 with instructions to the relieved officer to report for duty on the next working day. The officers have also been instructed to arrange for e-pass from Govt Authorities at their own as many restrictions on the movement of people and vehicle have been imposed in many states. In this unprecedented situation in the country, the movement of officers is fraught with grave risk of getting contaminated of themselves and their family members we feel the officers would be subjected to the following:

- a. Arrangement of e-pass to travel to the place of posting will be cumbersome (it may require inter-state, inter-district permission) and one has to put in a lot of effort to obtain it during this lockdown and social distancing.
- b. The hospitality sector has been completely shut down indefinitely to contain outbreak of the dreaded virus. Hence, arrangement of lodging and boarding by an officer will be a daunting task.
- c. The officers on transfer will be subjected to mandatory home quarantine for 14 days before resuming duty.
- d. The packaging and transportation service by vendors is yet to be started. Consequently, shifting of family and personal effects to the place of posting will be extremely difficult and risky.
- e. Arrangement of leased accommodation at the transferee place will be cumbersome and it may take months in the prevailing circumstances.

5. Sir, we draw your kind attention to the fact that the relieving of the officers/staff members, transferred under ICT has been postponed till 14th August to safeguard the health of the staff and to minimize the hardship to be faced by them on transfer. However, the decision to implement transfer orders issued by the Circle Managements at this juncture defies logic and rationale. Needless to say, this issue has caused much angst and resentment amongst the officers' fraternity and has caused concern amongst the family members as all places are not equipped with proper medical facilities during this pandemic.

6. The officers' fraternity has always been the fore runner in driving business and fulfilling the goals and objectives of our esteemed organisation. However, you will surely agree that the present situation prevailing at ground zero is not at all favourable for displacement of officers.

7. We, therefore, urge upon your good office to kindly intervene in the matter and arrange for issuing suitable advisory to Circles to put on hold release of officers from the point of view of their safety and their

family members until normalcy is restored. At the same time, we request you also to reschedule the training program for PO/TOs till some semblance of normalcy is restored.

In view of the foregoing, we would request you to consider our request sympathetically and take a holistic approach to stop the plight of the officers they will face with implementation of transfer order. ■

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## **DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS**

### **PRINCIPLES OF NATURAL JUSTICE**

### **APPEALS TO APPELLATE AUTHORITY**

***Text of our letter No: 7151/39/20, Dated: 19.05.2020, Addressed to The Deputy Managing Director (HR) & CDO, State Bank of India, Corporate Centre, Madame Cama Road, Mumbai – 400 021.***

You are aware that under Rule no. 69 (1) of SBIOSR an opportunity is given to an officer to prefer an appeal to the Appellate Authority within 45 days from the date of receipt of the order imposing upon him any of the penalties specified in rule 67 or against the order of suspension referred to in rule 68A. This privilege is given to the officer in consonance with the provision under Articles 14 and 21 of the Indian Constitution. Rule no.69 (2) of SBIOSR stipulates that the appeal shall be addressed to the Appellate Authority and submitted to the authority against whose order appeal is preferred for his remarks.

2. The said Appeal is processed at the LHO by the Appeals & Review Cell (DGM & CDO department) and submitted to the same Disciplinary Authority/Appointing Authority who has awarded the penalty, for their remarks / comments. The Appeal along with the remarks / comments of the Disciplinary Authority/Appointing Authority together with the relevant records is forwarded to the Appellate Authority at Circle/Corporate Centre for further consideration.

3. The Disciplinary Authority/Appointing Authority at times may not be willing to consider the submissions of the Appellant favourably, though they are valid submissions, since the charges/lapses were held as "Proved or Partly Proved" as the case may be by the Disciplinary Authority/Appointing Authority themselves. Personal likings and disliking may be at play. In such case, the officer is bound to lose a reasonable and genuine opportunity in complete violation of principles of Natural Justice as it loses its original fervour

associated with the very term, "Appeal" which originally is a prayer from the aggrieved employee to the higher management.

4. It is an established practice in the legal system that the same judge cannot be a part of the reviewing authority while reviewing the judgment in a given situation. This channel of appeal in domestic inquiries also goes with the principals of Natural Justice as a matter of opportunity to the aggrieved employee against the decision of the disciplinary authority. To instil confidence in the system, justice should not merely be done; justice should manifestly be seen to be done. If this is ignored, then the decision would be affected. It is a predisposition to decide for or against one party without proper regard to true merits of the dispute. A decision which is not based on evidence is biased. The Appeal procedure is considered to be a device enabling those who have been denied justice at the lower level. Accordingly, an appeal against the order given by a lower court is not processed through the same lower court but is submitted to the higher court directly.

5. Sir, you are aware that there have been significant changes in the system and procedures in many areas which were in practice for decades to suit the changing dynamics in the 21st century.

6. In the above backdrop, we suggest that the appeal, processed at the LHO by the Appeals & Review Cell (DGM & CDO department) should directly be sent to the Appellate Authority without involving the Disciplinary Authority/Appointing Authority who has awarded the penalty, so as to enable the Appellate Authority to take an independent and unbiased decision. The Appellate Authority shall consider whether the findings are justified or whether the penalty is excessive or inadequate and pass appropriate orders with

**NEVER BEND BEFORE THE INSOLENT MIGHT**

independent application of mind. Accordingly, the Appellate Authority may pass an order confirming, enhancing, reducing or setting aside the penalty or remitting the case to the authority which imposed the penalty or to any other authority with such direction as it may deem fit in the circumstances of the case. This will instill

confidence among the officers that justice has been done and principles of Natural Justice have been upheld. We, therefore, request you to look into the matter and take a holistic view in the system so that the grievances of the officers are suitably addressed.

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## COVID-19 – DONATION TO PM CARES FUND

At the outset, salute to the membership as well as leaders of all our Affiliates for being at the forefront in the stellar fight put forth by them against the new enemy of the entire mankind in the form of Coronavirus. We, along with other essential service workers, viz. doctors, health workers, telecommunication, sanitation workers, police, water supply & electricity distribution etc. are striving our utmost best to keep the wheels of the economy moving. At the time of penning down this Circular, the number of Covid-19 cases in our country has crossed the 2600 mark, while the death toll is over 70.

2. The COVID-19 outbreak has impacted millions of lives. We are in the midst of an unprecedented health and humanitarian crisis. The magnitude of the challenge is daunting but we have to display steely resolve to overcome it. There is a dire necessity to help out those who urgently require our support. Our Hon'ble Prime Minister has, among other things, announced setting up a separate fund, namely, Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and

Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM CARES FUND) to combat with the Coronavirus outbreak.

3. As a responsible trade union of bank officers, our Federation has contributed a sum of Rs 11 lakh (Rupees Eleven Lakh only) to the fund today. Further, as in the case of all calamities, our various affiliates have always been in the forefront in conducting welfare activities to offer assistance to the needy. Keeping in view the huge requirement of money for the purpose of relief and rehabilitation of the affected people of the country, we again call upon and appeal to all our Affiliates to contribute to the FUND created with a view to providing relief and other necessities to crores of our countrymen, a sizable portion of which has already been suffering a lot on account of loss of job, closures of trades and businesses due to the Nationwide lockdown.

4. We request all Affiliates to inform our secretariat about all philanthropic activities undertaken by them in this critical juncture. ■

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## JOIN HANDS TO REBUILD WEST BENGAL

***Text of AIBOC Circular No.2020/47 dated 26/05/2020.***

Extremely severe cyclone *Amphan* that hit West Bengal on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020, the fiercest in recent memory, battered the state for over 9 hours with a peak wind speed of 165-185 kmph packed with heavy rainfall, leaving a trail of death of many precious human lives and enormous destruction across half a dozen South Bengal districts besides Kolkata city. The state and its capital were left battered and bruised, as the vehemence of the cyclone caused extensive damages to harvest-ready crops and vegetables, livestock, fisheries,

dwelling as well as environment. At the time of penning the circular, there are vast areas in the capital city and the districts, which are still inundated and without any power and water supply. In the aftermath of fury of *Amphan*, low lying, coastal and mangrove forest areas of West Bengal are still flooded and in disarray. Potable water and essential materials have become scarce commodities. The grim pictures that are surfacing every day from the ravaged areas of the southern fringes of the state are heart breaking.

2. The people of the state is already under huge misery and hardship on account of increasing

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**TIME AND TIDE WAIT FOR NONE**

OFFICERS' CAUSE ENGLISH MONTHLY-RNI. NO.36617 / 81 TOTAL NO. OF PAGES 12 JUNE - 2020
REGN.NUMBER.KRNA/BGE/202/2018-2020 REGD. NUMBER.527/MDS PUBLISHED ON 10TH OF EVERY
MONTH-POSTED AT BANGALORE PSO, MYSORE ROAD, BANGALORE - 560 026 POSTED ON 15TH
OF EVERY MONTH-LICENSED TO POST WITHOUT PREPAYMENT. LICENCE NO. PMG BG/WPP/82 2018-2020

cumulative number of Confirmed COVID-19 cases and not decreasing daily infection rate (DIR). *Amphan* has added colossal plight for the common people. Displacement of a vast rural population followed by their rehabilitation at relief camps at this devastating situation has become a further source of fresh additions to Coronavirus contamination.

3. Preliminary estimates done by the state government peg the extent of damage at Rs. 1 lakh crore affecting at least 16 out of 23 districts of the state. The sheer scale of the disaster was immediately recognised by the Central government and on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020, the Hon'ble Prime Minister rushed to the city to conduct an aerial survey to assess the damage caused by cyclone *Amphan* especially across South 24 Parganas and North 24 Parganas – the worst affected districts in the state along with the Chief Minister and Governor of the state. Hon'ble Prime Minister announced a relief package of \$132 million (approximately Rs 1000 crore) forthwith.

4. True to the tradition and legacy of AIBOC, our State Unit in West Bengal along with its affiliates is fully geared up to extend all possible help not

only to our members but also to the cyclone victims across the length and breadth of the State. AIBOC will be contributing a sum of **Rs 15 lakh** (Rupees Fifteen lakh only) to the Chief Minister's Disaster Relief Fund to be a part of the effort to 'Rebuild West Bengal'.

5. Considering the extent of damages caused by cyclone *Amphan*, as a trade union with a predestined objective of observing social obligations and responsibilities, it is an imperative and humane bounden duty of ours to stand by the people of West Bengal and do the best we can to alleviate their sufferings. We urge upon all our Affiliates to contribute generously for the noble cause. Any such contribution may directly be credited to the West Bengal State Emergency Relief Fund (**A/C No. 628005501339, IFS Code ICIC0006280, ICICI Bank Ltd., Howrah Branch**) or alternatively routed through us by crediting to the account of the AIBOC Central Office bearing no. **36839815776, IFS Code SBIN0014524, SBI SPPB Branch Kolkata**.

Let us pledge to extend all possible assistance to 'Rebuild West Bengal'. We convey our deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives due to the cyclone.■

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Printed, Edited and Published By Shri. Soumya Datta on behalf of AISBOF at State Bank Building St.Mark's Road, Bangalore-560001 and printed by Shri. Ranga Reddy, at L. V. Graphic 3968, 7th Cross, 2nd Main, Gayathri Nagar, Bangalore - 560 021