



OFFICERS' CAUSE

DON'T BE A MULE UNDERSTANDING AND PREVENTING MONEY MULE ACTIVITIES

By Y. Gopal Krishna, Admin Secretary-AISBOF

Foreword

This informative article has been curated to simplify a complex subject. It aims to raise awareness, demystify jargon, and strengthen your understanding of how money mule networks operate, how to spot red flags, and how to respond effectively.

BEWARE OF "MONEY MULE" SCAMS Protect Yourself, Protect Your Future

UNDERSTANDING THE THREAT

In recent years, financial fraudsters have devised increasingly sophisticated ways to misuse innocent people for illegal activities. One such growing threat is the use of **"Money Mules"**—individuals who are tricked or persuaded into allowing their personal bank accounts to be used for receiving or transferring funds, often without knowing the true origin or purpose of the money. In a rapidly evolving digital banking environment, new threats and fraudulent practices continue to emerge, often targeting innocent individuals—including our own workforce.

While this might appear harmless to some at first glance—especially when masked as a favor or a quick way to earn money—the consequences can be severe, both legally and financially.

What Is a "Money Mule"?

Definition: A Money Mule is a person who transfers or moves illegally acquired money on behalf of someone else. ***This could be done knowingly or unknowingly.*** Even if the account holder is unaware that the funds are from criminal sources, the act remains illegal and can make the person liable for criminal prosecution.

HOW ARE MONEY MULES RECRUITED

Money mules are often recruited through deceptive methods such as :

- ★ Job advertisements that appear legitimate, often for roles like **"money transfer agents,"** shared via online job portals, emails, social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat), or through pop-up ads.
- ★ Direct messages sent through instant messaging apps like WhatsApp or Telegram, or via email.
- ★ In some cases, recruitment may happen in person.

Why Should You Be Concerned?

Using your account to move suspicious funds, even once, can have serious consequences:

- * Legal trouble
- * Bank restrictions
- * Damage to your personal and professional reputation

Ignorance is not a defence.

How Do Fraudsters Trap You?

Common Tricks Used by Criminals:

*** Fake Job Offers**

"Work-from-home" schemes that require only a bank account to receive payments

*** Easy Loan or Cashback Scams**

"Get instant loan approval—just help us route the money!", Fake claims of lottery winnings, cashbacks, or financial support—often asking to route funds through your account. Fraudsters offer quick money for letting them use your bank account.

The scheme is marketed as safe and legal, using phrases like "100% guaranteed," "**same day cash,**" or "**legit money.**"

They often share testimonials of supposed past earnings.

The pretext may vary, but the goal is always to obtain your bank account details.

*** Online Friendship or Romance**

"I'm in trouble. Can I transfer some money to your account?" Where online acquaintances claim they need help with receiving or sending money urgently.

*** Social Media Baits**

"Win cash prizes! We'll credit your account first.", Promises of easy money if you allow your account to be used temporarily. Approaches may come via social media, messaging apps, or even in person

Who Is at Risk?

Criminals typically target

- * Students
- * Unemployed youth & Young people under

the age of 35, with increasing focus on minors and youth aged 12 to 21.

- * Social media users seeking remote job opportunities.
- * People in financial need
- * Elderly or digitally inexperienced persons homemakers, and those facing financial stress.
- * New immigrants

If it sounds too good to be true—it probably is.

Red Flags to Watch Out For

What Could Happen If You Fall for It?

Legal Consequences

- * Arrest and prosecution under laws such as PMLA, IT Act, IPC
- * Investigation by cybercrime or enforcement agencies

Banking Consequences

- * Freezing or permanent closure of your bank account
- * Listing in defaulter or fraud databases
- * Denial of loans or financial services

Personal Consequences

- * Loss of job opportunities (especially in government, banking, and finance)
- * Social stigma and loss of credibility
- * Lengthy legal battles—even if you acted innocently

Your Responsibility as a Customer

DO:

- * Use your account for your own genuine transactions.
- * Report any unusual or unauthorized activity.
- * Educate family and friends, especially those at risk.

DON'T:

- * Share your account, ATM card, UPI credentials or OTPs.
- * Allow your account to be used by anyone else.
- * Respond to messages asking for account help or rewards.
- * Never share your bank account or personal details unless you completely trust the person.
- * Keep your bank cards secure. Never disclose your PIN, CVV, or online banking credentials.
- * Be highly cautious of unsolicited job offers or money-making opportunities online or in person.
- * Avoid any role involving money transfers through your account, no matter how genuine it may seem. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Bank Staff: Be Proactive, Be Aware

As the first line of defence, bank officials must

- * Guide and educate customers, especially youth and the elderly.
- * Flag suspicious accounts or transactions for review.
- * Include awareness tips in customer interactions, especially at account opening stage.

Branches can identify suspicious activity using VVR digital interface reports which highlight patterns such as

- * Numerous low-value or round-figure transactions
- * Credits from various parts of the country
- * High volumes of digital transactions
- * OTMS alerts, particularly for newly opened accounts showing unusual activity, must be investigated by reviewing VVR reports.

If a mule account is suspected, the branch must

- * File Suspicious Transaction Report
- * Conduct Enhanced Due Diligence & apply the partial freeze policy by issuing a notice and following due process.
- * Inform the Controller.

In case of notice from Law Enforcement Agencies requesting a STOP or HOLD on the account

- * Perform Enhanced due diligence immediately and if it fails, follow the steps above without delay.

Need Help or Suspicious? Do This

- * Report to Your Bank Branch Immediately
- * Call the National Cybercrime Helpline: 1930
- * Visit: cybercrime.gov.in

REMEMBER

"Letting someone use your account—even just once—can make you part of a financial crime."
Stay Smart. Stay Safe. Say NO to misuse of your bank account.■

UPWARD REVISION IN ALLOWANCES AND PERQUISITES

Text of AISBO Letter No.6523/12/25,Dated. 09.06.2025, Addressed to The Deputy Managing Director (HR) & Corporate Development Officer State Bank of India, Corporate Centre, Mumbai – 400021.

It gives us immense pleasure and a profound sense of pride to exclaim the Bank's exemplary performances across all the key indicators during the fiscal year 2024-25, setting new records and exceeding all past accomplishments under all the parameters. This historic success is a reflection of the collective strength and unified efforts within our organisation upholding the rich legacy of our Bank for more than 219 years.

At the core of this success are the Bank's officers, whose dedication, professionalism, and integrity continue to be the pivoting force for our progress. Their efforts, alongside the strategic vision and support of the management, have been instrumental in driving sustainable growth and operational excellence.

The Federation always remains committed in safeguarding the interests of officers while supporting the Bank's growth. In this spirit, we seek your kind attention to certain persistent anomalies that warrant immediate resolution to address prevailing discontent and to further strengthen the morale and commitment of our officers.

1. Rate of reimbursement of Travel by own vehicle:

The reimbursement of traveling allowance on per km basis for officers when travelling in his/her own vehicle for performance of official duties was last revised on 30.09.2011 through circular instruction, vide e-Circular No. CDO/P&HRD-PM/89/2011-12 issued on

Type of Vehicle	Engine Capacity	Rate per km (Rs.) Existing
Four-wheeler	1000 cc or more	9.00
Four-wheeler	Less than 1000cc	7.00
Motor cycle and scooter		4.50
Mopeds		3.00

03.01.2012 and the rates fixed had been as under: - It is pertinent to note that the reimbursement rate was revised at the industry level to ₹11/- per km for officers with effect from 01.02.2023. Subsequently, under the 12th Bipartite Settlement dated 08.03.2024, the same rate of ₹11/- per km was extended to award staff as well, irrespective of the engine capacity of their vehicle. This entitlement includes toll tax, where applicable, for travel undertaken in their own vehicle for official duties and LFC, subject to the relevant terms and conditions.

However, for officers, the reimbursement rates are yet to be revised in our bank, leading to disparity when compared to award staff and officers of other PSBs covered under the industry-level settlement. This inconsistency has become a serious concern within the officer fraternity, discouraging the use of personal vehicles for official purposes. An immediate revision of the reimbursement policy for officers is necessary to ensure parity and to prevent officers from incurring out-of-pocket expenses during such travel.

2. Health Check-up:

The Bank's Executive Health Check-up facility was last revised via e-Circular No. CDO/P&HRD-IR/88/2018-19 dated 15.02.2019. As per the prevailing guidelines, JMGS-I officers are excluded from the scheme, and MMGS-II officers are eligible only if they are aged 35 or above.

However, in accordance with the provisions of the 9th Joint Note and the 12th Bipartite Settlement dated 08.03.2024, all officers and employees are now entitled to regular health check-ups. Further, e-Circular No. CDO/P&HRD-IR/29/2024-25 dated 15.07.2024 has extended this benefit to all Award Staff, allowing biennial health check-ups with a reimbursement limit of ₹ 3,000/-, effective from 15.07.2024. Unfortunately, this benefit has not yet been extended to officers across all grades in our Bank.

It is paradoxical that an employee promoted from the clerical cadre to JMGS-I loses a health benefit

that was available in their previous role.

We, therefore, earnestly request your kind intervention to resolve this anomaly by extending the health check-up facility uniformly to all supervising staff, irrespective of their grade, scale and age.

3. Lodging expenses:

The eligible lodging reimbursement rates for officers on official duty were last revised long before during the year 2012 vide e-Circular No. CDO/P&HRD-PM/97/2011-12 dated 08.02.2012. Since then, rising inflation and increased hotel tariffs have led to officers being rendered out of pocket or they are being compelled settling with substandard/below standard accommodations. As the current rates are tagged with ITDC tariffs, which remain significantly lower than prevailing market rates. We therefore propose delinking the reimbursable rates from ITDC and aligning it with the prevailing hotel tariffs for different centers enabling the officers stay comfortably and at the same time does not go out of pocket while in performance of their official duties. The existing eligible rates of reimbursements are as follows:

Grade	ITDC Hotels	Metro	Major A	Area-I	Other
TEGSS I & II	4* Hotel	14600	13400	7200	6200
TEGS VI & VI	4* Hotel	11000	9700	6200	4800
SMGS-IV & V	3* Hotel	7200	6700	3800	2900
MMGS-II & III	2* Non AC	4000	3600	2600	2000
JMGS-I	1* Non AC	2600	2400	1900	1600

In alignment with the 12th Bipartite Settlement dated 08.03.2024 (e-Circular No. CDO/P&HRD-IR/29/2024-25 dated 15.07.2024), the eligible lodging expenses reimbursable for Clerical Staff has been revised as under: -

Category of Staff	A	B	C
	Places with population of 12 lakhs and above and States of Goa	Places with population of 5 lakhs and above, State Capitals/Capitals of Union Territories not covered in column A	Other places
Clerical Staff	₹ 3100/- per day	₹ 2600/- per day	₹ 2100/- per day

It is worth highlighting here that the lodging

reimbursement for JMGS-I officers is currently lower than that of clerical staff. Such incongruity is leading to widespread discontentment amongst junior cadre officers which not only undermines the hierarchical structure but also impacts on the morale and motivational quotient of the entry-level officers.

4. Leased Accommodation:

The rental ceiling for leased accommodation was last revised vide e-Circular No. CDO/P&HRD-PM/84/2021-22 dated 04.01.2022. Since then, there has been a significant rise in rental values across most urban and semi-urban areas, such as Pimpri-Chinchwad under Pune metropolitan region and many such other places where change in real estate dynamics and market inflation has been rampant. However, the existing rental ceilings have not been kept in alignment with the upward inflationary trends and high maintenance costs resulting in a growing mismatch between the eligible ceiling and the actual rate of rentals prevailing in the market. Such disparity in the eligibility and actual cost is compelling our officers to either pay the differential amount of rent from their own pockets or settle for accommodations not befitting to their standards.

To ensure that the officers are able to maintain appropriate and dignified living standards, especially when transferred/posted to locations with high rental costs, it is imperative that the rental ceilings be reviewed and revised in line with the prevailing market actuations.

In view of the above, we request your good office for an upward revision of all the eligible rates and rationalization of reimbursements.

We trust that your esteemed office will accord these matters the necessary urgency and take appropriate action to resolve the operational challenges currently affecting the employees. Your timely intervention will not only alleviate the difficulties being faced but also help reinstate seamless operations, thereby safeguarding employee morale and sustaining productivity. ■

CRITICAL ISSUES IN HRMS, TTS AND SYSTEM RELATED ANOMALIES

Text of AISBOF Letter No.6571/11/25, Dated: 06.06.2025, Addressed to The Deputy Managing Director (HR) & Corporate Development Officer State Bank of India, Corporate Centre, Mumbai – 400021.

This piece of communication is intended to bring into your kind and immediate attention towards a series of critical issues impacting the functionality of the HRMS, TTS, and related reimbursement and payroll structures in Zing HR. These glitches in the system are causing significant operational disruptions, financial inaccuracies, employee dissatisfaction and potential compliance risks which if not looked into with due alacrity might invite a sheer crisis like situation and result in gushing demotivation amongst the work force.

We elucidate below a detailed account of the concerns as observed and representations received from across the circles.

1. Failures Across Reimbursement Services:

* Nearly all reimbursement services, including LFC/TFA, are malfunctioning. The TFA module allows employees to submit two claims within the same four-year block period, violating the one-claim limit, risking incorrect reimbursements, tax compliance issues and future anomaly of legacy data.

* Lack of properly maintained approvers for reimbursement services results in delays or rejections of claims, exacerbating employee frustration and risking data inaccuracies.

2. Salary Creation for New Joinees:

* Salaries for several newly joined employees post-March 2025 have not been processed despite approved PA data. Additionally, approver data fetched from SAP is outdated due to transfers, preventing approval of newly recruited employee data by those approvers.

3. Leave Encashment Failures:

* The leave encashment module is not processing approved requests correctly, causing delayed or non-reflected payments. Encashment

against LFC/HTC/TFA is permitted beyond the stipulated 2-3 years or for more than 30 days in a four-year block, violating instructions and risking inaccuracies in leave balance records.

4. Non-Payment of Salaries:

* Several employees have not received their April 2025 salaries, causing significant discontent amongst the workforce.

5. No Provisions for Salary Component Corrections:

* The Zing HR system lacks mechanisms to correct critical salary components such as CCA, PQP, and Job Key Allowances, leading to inaccurate salary calculations fraught with income leakage and unwarranted recalculation or recoveries from the employees.

6. No Backdated Payment Functionality:

* The system does not support backdated corrections for HRA due to lease surrenders, allotments of bank quarters or delayed processing of salaries, increments, or reimbursements aiding to employee woes.

7. Persistent TTS Issues:

* Long-standing issues in the TTS impede efficient tracking and processing of employee transfers, risking inaccuracies in transfer and role allotments. Position creation for newly opened branches/offices is also not supported causing cascading impact on CDS and career prospects for the employees concerned.

8. System Downtime and Slow Performance:

* Frequent outages and slothful performance in HRMS and TTS are causing disruption to critical tasks. We recommend providing a separate interface for Circle HRMS/Zing HR teams to minimize anomalies and timely redressal of the issues crop in.

9. CDS Roles Closure Misconfigurations:

* Recent CDS roles closure exercises were

disrupted by HRMS misconfigurations, forcing last-minute resets and rushed evaluations. This led to inconsistent grading, limited quota issues, and adverse impacts on employee career progression apart from dwindling morale.

10. Centralized Wage Revision Errors:

* The wage revision effective from 01.04.2024 erroneously released increments to ineligible employees in the old HRMS system, causing income leakage, payroll cost inflation, and compliance risks. The system also altered annual increment dates in several other cases.

11. Complex Interfaces and Insufficient Training:

* Non-intuitive interfaces and inadequate training lead to data entry errors, particularly among non-technical staff, menacing HRMS data accuracy.

12. Payments to Separated Employees:

* Salaries for April 2025 were paid to already separated employees/pensioners, leading to financial leakage proliferating losses for the bank apart from hassles of recovery.

13. Family Details Updation Issues:

* Mandatory PAN and Aadhar requirements for updating family details are restrictive in nature. The system does not allow inclusion of father/father-in-law or mother/mother-in-law as dependents causing anomalous connotation of SBIOSR. Conversion to family pension for deceased pensioners has not been processed since March 2025 causing distress to the bread earners.

14. Salary Register Discrepancies:

* The Circle's salary register shows incorrect payroll data, generating inaccurate salary files that are not in sync with the actual payments causing hassles and misery of job repetitions.

15. Deductions and Recovery Issues:

* Deductions for memberships in associations/unions/cooperative societies are being clubbed in salary slips.

* No front-end provisions exist to recover/

stop chummy rent, furniture rent, or excess salary paid in cases of unauthorized absence, EOL, or resignation.

* Functionality has not been rolled for backdated promotion actions or full salary payments on completion of one-year suspension periods. Reimbursements like newspaper, labour, telephone, and furniture maintenance are not processed during suspensions and in few cases even after reinstatements.

* Medical reimbursement bill redirection functionality has not been made available to the Circle team causing inordinate delays in settlement of such reimbursements.

16. Failure of Support Team:

* The Circle HRMS and Corporate HRMS teams have failed in striking a synergy to resolve multifarious issues of employees resulting in largescale dissatisfaction and complaints. We therefore recommend implementing a Turnaround Time (TAT) monitoring system to assess the productivity of the Zing HR team in view of streamlining the efforts.

17. Membership Enrolment/Deduction Control of Association / Cooperative Societies

* To ensure uniformity and adherence to checks and balances requirements, membership enrolment/deductions under the check-off facility for associations/unions/cooperative societies be managed solely by the Circle HR/HRMS teams. Maker-Checker functionality at the branch/office level to be immediately scrapped down to take guard against unauthorised mushrooming/deprivation of membership without any mandate or authority vested by the concerned administrative structure of the circle associations.

We trust that your esteemed office will accord these matters the necessary urgency and take appropriate action to resolve the operational challenges currently affecting the employees. Your timely intervention will not only alleviate the difficulties being faced but also help reinstate seamless operations, thereby safeguarding employee morale and sustaining productivity.■

DISCUSSIONS WITH IBA ON MEDICAL INSURANCE SCHEME

Text of AIBOC Circular No. 2025/24, reproduced the text of UFBU Circular no. 2025/08 .

All our Unions and members are aware that after a lot of efforts by the UFBU, vide Minutes signed with IBA on 2-7-2024, we could secure a common Group Medical Insurance Policy for in service employees/officers and retirees which helped to reduce the premium payable by the retirees. This Policy has to be renewed this year by October, 2025. Hence in order to discuss further improvements/ modifications in the Scheme, IBA had arranged a virtual meeting with UFBU yesterday evening.

IBA team was led by Shri Rajneesh Karnatak (MD & CEO, Bank of India), Chairman of the Negotiating Committee and UFBU was represented by all our Unions.

During the discussions the following suggestions were placed from our side:

1. Existing Scheme of Group Medical Insurance should be continued further.
2. Policy should continue to be a combined Policy covering serving staff and retirees.
3. The base cover amount to be increased considerably under three categories viz. a) workmen staff b) officers upto Scale V and c) officers Scale VI and above.
4. Suitable increase in allocation under Buffer cover.
5. Premium for the retirees to be borne by the Banks.
6. Inclusion of new diseases and treatments under the Scheme.
7. TPAs should be effectively monitored and periodically reviewed to ensure quick disposals and to avoid unilateral rejections.
8. IBA should have a say in selecting and appointing TPAs.
9. For serving staff, inclusion of parents (who are not dependents due to income criteria)

under the Policy on payment of the extra premium by concerned staff.

10. For retirees, dependent physically and mentally challenged children to be included for coverage as add on facility.
11. All Hospitals to be covered under cashless facility.
12. Adherence to IRDAI guidelines on cashless facility by all hospitals.
13. Master Policy should be as per the provisions of our Settlement/Joint Note.
14. Automatic trigger of Buffer cover upto prescribed amount for hospitalization for critical illnesses/specified diseases.
15. Original Bills/Hospital reports, etc. to be submitted to the Bank/Branch to avoid TPAs asking the claimants to submit duplicate Bills/Reports.
16. As per IRDAI guidelines, TPA should correspond with the Hospital for any query or clarifications about the treatment given.
17. Inclusion of root canal treatment under dental treatment.
18. Cost of artificial limb to be covered under the scheme
19. Medicines prescribed life long after treatment to be covered under domiciliary treatment.
20. Review of ceiling on room rent/bed charges

IBA noted down all our suggestions and assured to examine and discuss the same with the Insurance company to understand the cost implications before the issue could be further discussed with the UFBU in the next round of meeting.

Further developments will be informed to unions and members in due course.■

INCREASING ATTACKS AND ASSAULTS IN BANK BRANCHES DFS ISSUED ADVISORIES TO ALL STATE GOVERNMENTS

Text of AIBOC Circular No. 2025/25, reproduced text of UFBU Circular no. 2025/09

Our unions and members are aware that in the recent agitation and Strike Notice, we had highlighted the issue of increasing attacks and assaults on employees and officers in bank branches. During the conciliation meeting before the Chief Labour Commissioner, we pointed out that unruly customers and banking public are indulging in physical assaults on employees and officers in Branches and such customers also use abusing language on the staff members.

We demanded that in addition to Bank managements taking swift action on these erring customers, the State Governments should also ensure proper protection of bank staff. We also demanded that Banks should provide Security Staff/ Armed Guards in the Branches.

The representatives of the Dept. of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, Government of India informed us in the conciliation that they also share our concerns and the issue will be escalated to the higher authorities.

The Secretary of the DFS has sent a communication to all the Chief Secretaries of the States as under:

M. NAGARAJU

SECRETARY

Government of India,

Ministry of Finance,

Department of Financial Services

D.O. No. 9/9/7/2025-IR

4th June, 2025

Dear Chief Secretary,

Securing the availability of banking services to the public at all times is essential to enable

households to meet their daily financial needs, access government welfare benefits through Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) and for traders, micro-entrepreneurs, farmers and industries to carry on their economic activities without disruption.

2. News reports and social media coverage in the recent past highlighted disturbing incidents of anti-social elements behaving aggressively with bank staff within bank premises, which includes verbal abuse, physical assault and even disruption of operations. These are the unlawful actions which discourage the morale of bank staff and undermine public trust in the safe delivery of banking services. Such actions must be dealt with firmly and promptly, with deterrent legal measures to protect bank staff and ensure uninterrupted public access to banking.

3. In this context, I request you to issue suitable advisories to sensitize and instruct District Magistrates and the State Police to:

- (i) Take all preventive measures to avoid such incidents in bank branches including deployment of local police/ patrolling during peak banking hours at vulnerable locations.
- (ii) Ensure prompt and effective response to such complaints by the designated law enforcement agencies.
- (iii) Take strong and deterrent action against perpetrators under relevant provisions.

4. These measures will enhance public trust, provide a secured environment for bank employees and facilitates the effective delivery of banking services. ■

BIPARTITE TALK BETWEEN IBA AND UFBU ON GROUP MEDICAL INSURANCE SCHEME FOR EMPLOYEES, OFFICERS AND RETIREES

Text of AIBOC Circular No. 2025/27, dated 13.06.2025, reproduced the text of UFBU Circular no. 2025/10 dated 13.06.2025.

Further to last round of meeting with IBA held on 21-5-2025 on renewal of the policy for the year 2025-26 and for discussing improvements in the scheme, one more round of meeting took place today between IBA and UFBU at IBA's office in Mumbai. IBA was represented by their team led by Shri Rajneesh Karnatak, Chairman of the negotiating Committee (MD&CEO, Bank of India). From UFBU all our Unions participated in the meeting.

After discussion, it was agreed that this year also, it would be combined Policy covering both serving staff and retirees. While discussing the issue of improvement in base cover/sum assured, IBA informed that as per the statistical information available from the Insurance Company, it is observed that nearly 98% of the claims are below ₹ 3 lacs and about 85% of the claims ranged between ₹ 25,000 to ₹ 30,000.

IBA also informed that an App is being developed by which claims upto ₹ 25,000 can be claimed digitally and to be settled without much hassle and delay. IBA also informed that last year the total claim under buffer was around Rs. 103 crores against the limit of ₹ 100 crores.

After further discussions, the following have been agreed to be incorporated in the Policy for the ensuing year 2025-26:

1. The sum insured for

- ➔ Award staff shall be increased to ₹ 4 lakhs from the present level of ₹ 3.00 lakhs

- ➔ Officers up to Scale V : Increase to ₹ 5.25 lakhs from the present level of ₹ 4.00 lakhs

- ➔ For scale VI and above: Increase to ₹ 7 lakhs from the present level of ₹ 4.00 lakhs

2. Corporate Buffer Amount shall be increased to 125 Crores from the present level of 100 Crores
3. Cataract upper cap shall be ₹ 40,000/- per eye.
4. Hormonal therapy for cancer and Immunotherapy for non-cancer to be included
5. Robotic surgery shall be considered in cases where the condition of patient warrants such treatment. This needs to be vetted by the treating doctor.
6. Thyroid cancer shall be included under critical illness
7. **For retirees:** Mentally/physically challenged Dependent family member shall be included by way of add-on. Premium to be paid by retiree/ spouse
8. Top-up options to be made available for ₹ 1 lakh, 2 Lakhs and 3 Lakhs the premium of which shall be borne by the serving employee / retiree.

Based on the above, IBA would now take further steps to call for Tenders, etc. so that the Policy is renewed in time. ■

COM. P.V. MOHANAN BECKONS, COMRADE PV MOHANAN BEACONS.

Text of AIBOC Circular No. 2025/26, dated 11.06.2025.

June is the month of soulful involvements, June is the month when mermaids dance to the tunes of damsels, June is the month to remember and emulate the untiring and indomitable spirit of Comrade P.V. Mohanan, that divined an indelible mark in the millions of struggling hearts and ignited minds.

It is ten years since a dark shadow galloped our movement and a grave injustice was done to one of our cavaliers, all along unbending, passionate and extravagant to the core. It was the tyranny of tyrants that resulted in dismissal of Comrade PV Mahanan on June the 11th 2015 from the active services of the bank. The former General Secretary of Dhanlaxmi Bank Officers' Organisation (DBOO) and National Vice President of AIBOC was cast out, not with a pinch of dignity but with a termination notice pasted disgracefully on the wall in a cowardly manner without a single charge and even without a sliver of fair hearing thus unleashing a brutal attack on the very principles of justice, we embrace as sacred.

With a passage of 10 long years, it is time we rejoice our solidarity and feel the warmth of the fire that ignited agitating minds culminating into a historic 33 days long saga of struggle and sacrifices when DBOO stood as one. It is time to celebrate the camaraderie that brought all the members of DBOO under a single roof in unbreakable solidarity. Comrades heavy with child, comrades cradling infants, brave souls fasting unto death. Those were the days when collective strength blazed bright,

proving that, when one is wronged, we all are one.

AIBOC stood persistently with Comrade Mohanan, supporting his legal battle, which led to the 2022 Thrissur Sub Court ruling declaring the termination "unsustainable." AIBOC reaffirms its staunch support for DBOO and Comrade P.V. Mohanan as the case progresses in the Kerala High Court until it reaches to a logical conclusion, yet believes such a glorified career should not be left to the mercy of court judgments, urging a dignified resolution that upholds his principles and ensures justice, dignity, and all rightful dues, including pension, from his scheduled retirement date.

It had been a saga of 38 long years, when Com. Mohanan poured his heart and soul into the Bank and for the cause of the Trade Union movements. He was not just a leader; but a guiding light, philosopher and a friend showing us the path of conviction and a principled way of accomplishments of our rights. His dismissal was not just an attack on him as an individual; but it was an attack, on all the free thinkers for whom poise and values weigh more than the galore of temptations and allurements of impunity against our collective dignity.

Let the decade-long struggle be our reassembling cry. Let us unite, stronger than ever, to finally secure the justice for Comrade Mohanan that he rightfully deserves. In winning his fight, we honour his legacy and hearth a future where fairness and dignity are the bedrock for every bank officer, where winning becomes a matter of habit.

We vouch for solidarity, Solidarity forever. ■

NEVER BEND BEFORE THE INSOLENT MIGHT

CONCILIATION MEETING HELD ON 17-6-2025 BY CLC

Text of AIBOC Circular No. 2025/28, dated 18.06.2025, reproduced the text of UFBU Circular no. 2025/11 dated 18.06.2025.

Our members are aware that consequent to our call for Strike, the Chief Labour Commissioner of the Ministry of Labour, Government of India, held two rounds of conciliation meetings on 18-3-2025 and 21-3-2025 wherein it was decided, in view of the discussions with the IBA and the officials of the Dept. of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance and the assurances of the CLC, to postpone our two days' strike action.

Subsequently, IBA had called us for bipartite discussions on 23-4-2025, the outcome of which has been informed to members in our previous circular. This was followed by conciliation meeting on 29-4-2025 the details of which have also been communicated to all our unions.

As a follow up of this, one more round of conciliation proceedings were held yesterday i.e. 17-6-2025 by the Chief Labour Commissioner. Representatives from the Dept. of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, IBA and Bank managements were present. From UFBU, representatives of our 9 unions were present.

Gist of the discussions held during the conciliation proceedings:

5 Days Banking:

We pointed out that the strike was postponed only on the assurance of the DFS that the issue is

receiving serious attention of the Government and since there has been no development in the issue. We informed the Government that if there is further delay in the matter, UFBU will be constrained to revive the strike call. The CLC informed that he has also taken up the issue with the DFS. DFS representatives explained that they are of the sensitivity of the issue and that the matter is under consideration of the Government though timeline can't be committed on the same. We informed the IBA and Government that UFBU cannot wait indefinitely and that the UFBU is considering reviving the strike call.

Increasing attacks on Bank staff in Branches :

We welcomed the communication sent by the Secretary, DFS to all the Chief Secretaries of the States and UTs to provide adequate safety measures with instructions to issue suitable advisories to sensitize and instruct District Magistrates and the State Police to (i) Take all preventive measures to avoid such incidents in bank branches including deployment of local police/ patrolling during peak banking hours at vulnerable locations, (ii) Ensure prompt and effective response to such complaints by the designated law enforcement agencies and (iii) Take strong and deterrent action against perpetrators under relevant provisions. But we pointed out that such attacks still continue and quoted the instance that occurred in SBI, Dhule a few days ago. The CLC advised the IBA to follow up the matter and advise the Banks to take immediate steps to avoid any such occurrences in future.

Revised PLI Scheme of the DFS for Scale IV officers and above:

We pointed out that even though the issue is under conciliation and hence the managements are expected to await further outcome of the proceedings, Punjab National Bank has implemented the PLI for employees and officers upto Scale III. CLC expressed his view that PNB management should not have done this when the issue is before him.

Representative of DFS that it is proposed to give flexibility to the Banks' Board for identification of officers in different brackets in each scale, within the ambit of the PLI scheme. However, we did not agree to this since according to us, any Incentive should be for collective performance. After a lot of discussions, it was agreed that representatives of unions and the IBA would discuss the issue to come up with certain proposal within the ambit of the scheme.

Such proposal shall be submitted to the DFS for review of the present scheme in the light of the proposal so that a consensus may be arrived at in order to maintain smooth and cordial relation in the industry.

In the meantime, all the Banks are to await the outcome and not proceed with the implement of PLI for the year 2024-25.

Recruitments and Outsourcing:

Some of the Banks like Union Bank, Bank of Baroda, Indian Bank, SBI, Canara Bank and Punjab & Sind bank informed the details of the recruitments made for 2025-26 and the tentative

intake for 2026-27. CLC opined that all the Banks should provide the details in order to understand the issue in totality in the light of the demands of the Unions. Hence it was decided that IBA would collect the necessary data before further discussions.

We pointed out that in respect of substaff, Banks are not resorting to recruitment in view of the minutes signed with DFS and this is resulting in huge unfilled vacancies and Banks employing casual and temporary employees for the same. Bank of Baroda management informed that they are going for recruitment of 500 substaff. We pointed out that managements are seeking to outsource these vacancies instead of recruiting regular employees. IBA informed that the issue of areas of outsourcing needs to be discussed and resolved bilaterally as already advised by the CLC. CLC advised that IBA and the Unions have to sit together and bilaterally resolve the issue of recruitments and outsourcing.

Enhancement in Gratuity limit:

We took up this issue and it was informed that the matter is under process at the Government level for increasing the limit to Rs. 25 lacs under the Gratuity Act.

Appointment of Workman/Officer Directors:

We took up the issue and DFS representatives informed that the proposals sent by them to the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet – ACC are awaiting the approval.

The conciliation proceedings have been adjourned to 11th August, 2025 for further discussions.■

**[2024 (181) FLR 1032]
(CALCUTTA HIGH COURT)
ARINDAM MUKHERJEE, J.
W.P.A. No. 655 of 2018
March 19, 2024
Between
ASHOK KUMAR PODDAR
and
STATE BANK OF INDIA and others**

Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952—Section 7-A—Order of freezing bank account of petitioner—Challenged in present writ petition—Respondent No. 7 company went into liquidation and a claim of approx. 22 crores was made by EPF authorities before the NCLT, Bengaluru—NCLT considered the claim and allowed it to the extent of approx. 20 crores and said amount has been received by the EPF authorities—Once the additional demand by EPF authorities has been considered and negated by the NCLT, the same demand cannot be made again and again by them —SBI directed to de-freeze the account of the petitioner—
Petition disposed of. [Paras 7 to 9]

By the said order while considering the application being I.A. No. 404 of 2022, the NCLT has taken note of the amount claimed by the EPF Authorities, the amount allowed by the Liquidator as also the additional amount. It was clearly held that the additional demand raised by the Employees' Provident Fund Organization that is EPFO is not admissible and allowable. The application, being IA 404 of 2022 was accordingly dismissed. This order has not been challenged as yet and should be taken to have achieved finality.

The balance claimed by deducting ₹ 20,58,09,617/- for ₹ 22,89,67,613/- and the interest from 10 th June, 2022 till 2 nd June, 2023 has been considered by the said authority and has been specifically negated. The same claim cannot be made again and again when competent forum dealing with the liquidation proceedings have turned down the same without having assailed the order dated 2 nd June, 2023, in accordance with law. The NCLT is also a fact finding forum and as such all factual aspects of the claim of the EPFO has been placed and considered resulting in specific refusal of the same. Taking advantage of this proceedings being one

before a different forum cannot be entertained once the same has been gone into.

Counsel for the Petitioners : Soumya Majumder, Chayan Gupta, P. Bandyopadhyay, S. Nandy, Deepankar Thakur and Gyan Prakash.

Counsel for the Respondents : Anil Kumar Gupta, Rittick Choudhury and Shoham Sanyal.

JUDGMENT

ARINDAM MUKHERJEE, J. — The writ petition was filed on 10 th January, 2018 challenging a recovery proceedings by which a sum of ₹ 4,19,43,881/- was directed to be recovered by the Recovery Officer vide order dated 14 th December, 2017 for a default on the part of the establishment, M/s. Falcon Tyres Limited, Mysore , (respondent No. 7) having the Code KN/6707, which resulted initiation of a proceedings under Section 7-A of the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 (in short, EPF & MP Act). By the said order, the said sum of ₹ 4,19,43,881/- was directed to be recovered from a savings bank account bearing No. 32899201231 maintained with the State Bank of India or any other account maintained with the said bank. Prior to issuance of the said order, the operation of the subject bank account was freezed by a prohibitory order dated 28 th June, 2016. The company-Falcon Tyres Limited had gone into liquidation on 30 th December, 2019 by virtue of an order of the adjudicating authority in a proceedings filed under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (in short, IBC). One Shri Shivadutt Bannanje was appointed as a Liquidator of the Corporate Debtor. The EPF Authorities lodged a claim before the said Liquidator on 10 th June, 2022. The claim was for an aggregate sum of ₹ 22,89,67,613/- which was said to be due on 10 th June, 2022. The principal claim as appears from the said statement of claim at page 248 of the

supplementary affidavit affirmed by the petitioner on 25 th January, 2024 is for ₹ 4,19,43,881/- for the period 12/2013 to 01/2015. The balance amount is on account of interest and penalty. The supplementary affidavit affirmed by the petitioner on 24 th January, 2024 is not on record but a copy thereof has been served on the respondents. A copy of the supplementary affidavit affirmed by the petitioner on 24 th January, 2024 as made over to Court is retained with the records.

2. The Liquidator has considered the claim of the EPF Authorities and allowed a total claim of ₹ 20,58,09,617/-. The claim as allowed by the Liquidator was approved by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), Bengaluru Bench by an order dated 2 nd June, 2023 passed in C.P. (IB) No. 14/BB/2017 by which several interlocutory applications were disposed of. This amount was received by the EPF Authorities from the Liquidator from out of the assets of the company in liquidation on 20th December, 2023.

3. The writ petitioner says that the savings bank account, bearing No. 32899201231 and maintained with the State Bank of India Ballygunge Park Branch is a joint account of the petitioner and the respondent Nos. 8, 9 and 10. The said bank account, according to the petitioner, has no nexus with the establishment, Falcon Tyres Limited, the respondent No. 7 in this proceedings. The petitioner says that the entire amount receivable by the EPF Authorities has been quantified by the Liquidator, approved by the NCLT, Bengaluru Bench and paid in full as on 20 th December, 2023 and as such, nothing is due and recoverable from such account. The writ petitioner, therefor, prays for de-freezing the said bank account and disposed of the writ petition as nothing further requires to be adjudicated.

4. The concerned bank account as appears from the order of the Recovery Officer dated 14 th December, 2017 had a balance sum of ₹ 6,51,93,094/-. The balance, according to the petitioner, as per the statement for the period dated 10 th January, 2007 to 10 th July, 2007 was ₹ 5,25,93,851/-.

5. The respondent Nos. 8, 9 and 10, being the other joint account holder support the cause of the

petitioner on the ground that the entire provident fund dues with interest and penalty has been duly received by the authorities on 28 th December, 2023.

6. The EPF Authorities objected to such prayer. By placing a letter dated 16 th January, 2024, issued by the Regional Provident Fund Commissioner-II, Regional Office, Mysore, learned advocate representing the PF Authorities submits that a sum of ₹ 1,35,03,477/- is recoverable as interest from 10 th June, 2022 when the claim was lodged and 28 th December, 2023 when the final payment was received in view of the provisions of Section 7-Q of the EPF & MP Act. The EPF Authorities also say that they are entitled to receive the balance claim by deducting ₹ 20,58,09,617/- from ₹ 22,89,67,613/- and as such, the aggregate remaining amount for recovery is ₹ 3,66,61,473/-. The EPF Authorities say that this sum of ₹ 3,66,61,473/- is required to be secured by the petitioner if he wants his bank account to be made operational/de-frozen.

7. The same claim was raised by the EPF Authorities before the NCLT, Bengaluru Bench by filing an application, being I. A. No. 404 of 2022 which was disposed of by an order dated 28 th June, 2023. By the said order while considering the application being I.A. No. 404 of 2022, the NCLT has taken note of the amount claimed by the EPF Authorities, the amount allowed by the Liquidator as also the additional amount. It was clearly held that the additional demand raised by the Employees' Provident Fund Organization that is EPFO is not admissible and allowable. The application, being IA 404 of 2022 was accordingly dismissed. This order has not been challenged as yet and should be taken to have achieved finality.

8. The claim for securing a sum of ₹ 3,66,61,473/-, the particulars whereof is provided in the letter dated 16 th January, 2024 as raised herein, therefor, was raised before an authority in seisin of the liquidation proceedings to the extent of the balance claimed by deducting ₹ 20,58,09,617/- for ₹ 22,89,67,613/- and the interest from 10 th June, 2022 till 2 nd June, 2023 has been considered by the said authority and has been specifically negated. The same claim cannot be made again and again when competent forum dealing with the liquidation proceeding have turned down the same without having assailed the order dated 2 nd June, 2023, in accordance with law. The

NCLT is also a fact finding forum and as such all factual aspects of the claim of the EPFO has been placed and considered resulting in specific refusal of the same. Taking advantage of this proceedings being one before a different forum cannot be entertained once the same has been gone into. The date of initiation of the liquidation proceedings has been clearly notified in the order dated 2 nd June, 2023 and any claim beyond that date has also been specifically negated.

9. In the aforesaid facts and circumstances, there is no merit in the arguments advanced by the EPFO. The State Bank of India is, therefor, directed to withdraw, cancel and/or rescind any direction given for de-freezing the savings bank account, bearing No. 32899201231, maintained jointly by the petitioner and the respondent Nos. 8, 9 and 10 with the State Bank of India Ballygunge Park Branch issued under the instructions of the EPF Authorities. Any direction for de-freezing the savings bank account in question given by the EPF authorities is also set aside in the facts and circumstances of the case by recording accord and satisfaction of the claim of the EPF authorities.

10. The bank account in question should be made operational within 24 hours from service of a server copy of the instant order.

11. All parties including the State Bank of India , the EPF authorities shall act on a basis of a server copy of this order downloaded from the official website of this Court without insisting upon production of a certified copy thereof.

12. Since this writ petition is heard on affidavits and order of the NCLT, the claim lodged by EPFO and the direction of the Liquidator has been considered as part of the supplementary affidavit, nothing further remains to be adjudicated in the writ petition. The same is accordingly is disposed of.

13. Allegations, if any, contained in the supplementary affidavit affirmed by the petitioner on 24 January, 2024 are deemed to have not been admitted by the EPF Authorities.

14. The disposal of this writ petition will also dispose of all the applications filed in the said writ petition which are pending for adjudication.

Urgent photostat certified copies of this order, if applied for, be supplied to the parties upon compliance of all necessary formalities. ■

Petition Disposed Of.

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