

OFFICERS' CAUSE MARCH - 2025





OFFICERS' CAUSE

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY – 8th MARCH 2025

#AccelerateAction

On the occasion of International Women's Day – 8th March 2025, the All-India Bank Officers' Confederation extends its warm and revolutionary greetings to all our lady comrades working across the Banking Industry. This day, celebrated globally, recognizes the remarkable achievements and contributions of women while advocating for gender equality, greater women's rights and deeper assimilation of women in the socio-economic, political and cultural landscape.

The theme for this year – #AccelerateAction – serves as a powerful reminder of the long journey from the feudal dominance of the early 20th century to the present day. While significant strides have been made towards women's empowerment, the stark reality in terms of parity remains a distant dream. Despite technological advancements and societal progress, women continue to face inequalities, gender biasness particularly in the workplace, domestic and in public sphere.

The year 2024 exposed the harsh reality about the safety and dignity of women in our country, from heinous crimes in medical establishments to the systemic oppression, the misery remains widespread. Public outcry often falls in deaf ears and the remedial actions proving anarchic and fruitless. Our women counterparts not only shoulders organisational obligations but at the same time performs the additional role of managing household responsibilities. Against this backdrop, our Confederation's call to observe International Women's Day bears enormous significance and demands for our commitment to formulate women friendly policies to ensure safety and security of our lady comrades at the work place as well as a level playing field augmenting equal opportunity and scope for their overall development and prosperity.

Emerging social pattern has resulted in women participating in mainframe workforce and it is imperative that the workplaces are made fully equipped to suit to the requirements of women

employees and address their issues with alacrity. On this perspective, the Confederation reiterates its longstanding demands for:

- ★ Crèche facilities at workplaces;
- ★ Special provisions in transfer and posting guidelines for lady officers;
- ★ Extension of special leave to cater to family emergencies and medical exigencies;
- ★ Comprehensive workplace security and redressal mechanisms.

While some of these issues were partially addressed in the last wage negotiation, much remains to be accomplished. A world where women must carry self-defence tools or nurture fear in stepping out alone is not the world we aspire for. The persistent lack of accountability continues to embolden perpetrators of violence against women and it falls back on the part of the collectives to address such issues and make the world a better place to live in for all our women folks.

It is our collective responsibility to dismantle the patriarchal dominance that still prevents women from realizing their full potential hindering in fulfilling their individual aspirations. It is ridiculous to envisage becoming a five trillion-dollar economy when half of our population is denied the opportunity to contribute due to vulnerability in public spaces, workplaces, as well in domestic arena.

On this International Women's Day, the All-India Bank Officers' Confederation pledges to continue its endeavour ensuring safety, security, dignity and empowerment of women. Let us stand united in our struggle for a world where every woman's voice is heard, her rights are upheld, and her contributions are celebrated.

Happy International Women's Day!

SUBMISSION OF MEMORANDUM TO THE SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES BY UFBU

Reproduced the text of the memorandum submitted to the Secretary, Department of Financial Services by the representatives of the United Forum of Bank Unions detailing each of the agenda items of our strike:



Date : 3-3-2025

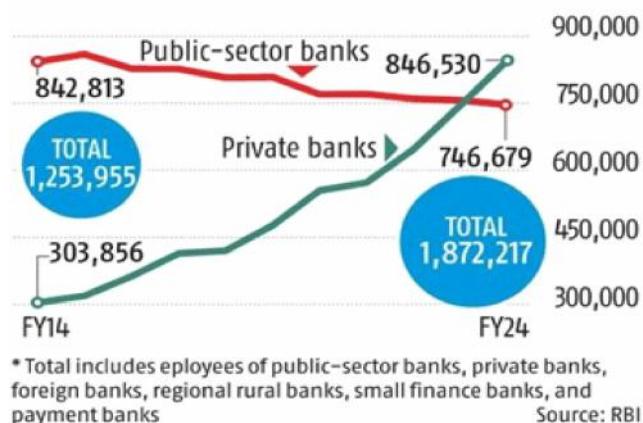
To
Shri. M. Nagaraju Secretary
Dept. of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance
Govt of India, New Delhi
Dear Sir,

On behalf of the United Forum of Bank Unions, we the representatives of the 9 constituent Unions, wish to submit the following representation to you with a request to consider the same for favourable perusal and outcome.

1. Need for adequate recruitments: The public sector banking system in India forms the backbone of the country's financial infrastructure, ensuring the effective implementation of government schemes, financial outreach programs, and inclusive economic growth. However, over the years, the workforce in public sector banks (PSBs) has dwindled significantly, creating an unsustainable work environment and compromising the efficiency and reach of these institutions. Over the last decade, the employee count in public sector banks has seen a steady decline due to retirements, voluntary exits, and inadequate recruitment drives. Similar is the problem in the old private Banks, Regional Rural Banks and Co-op. Banks. But in contrast, new private sector banks have rapidly increased their workforce, leveraging aggressive recruitment strategies to enhance their operational efficiency and customer service. . Since 2013, employees in the clerical category of state-owned banks have gone down from 3,98,801 to 246,965 and the number of sub-

staff went down from 1,53,628 to 94,348 for the same period. In contrast, employees in the private banks have gone up from 225,805 in FY2014 to 796,809 in FY2024.

HEADCOUNT SURGE



Despite having a larger market share and wider reach, public sector banks are significantly understaffed compared to their private sector counterparts. Public sector banks account for over 60% of the total market share, with a network of approximately 90,000 branches across the country. Private sector banks, with less than 40% market share, operate fewer branches yet employ a greater number of personnel, highlighting the disparity in workforce allocation.

In public sector banks, the average customer-to-employee ratio goes upto 2000:1, far surpassing the average of 300:1 in the new private banks. This disparity burdens public sector employees with excessive workloads, resulting in delays, errors, and deteriorating customer service. Public sector bank employees report high levels of stress and burnout due to overwork, inadequate staffing, and increasing administrative responsibilities. Reports have surfaced of mental health crises among employees, with incidents of suicides, depression, and toxic work environments becoming alarmingly frequent.

Public sector banks handle a disproportionate share

of government-directed financial inclusion initiatives, such as, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Mudra Loan Scheme, PM Kisan Samman Nidhi etc. PSBs execute over 80% of these programs, despite their limited workforce, while private sector banks largely abstain, citing lower profitability and higher operational costs. Due to inadequate staff, the ability of PSBs to reach underserved populations is compromised, affecting the broader economic goals of the government.

The lack of permanent subordinate staff has led branches to rely on temporary housekeeping personnel for essential, sensitive tasks, such as handling documents and managing restricted areas like currency chests. This dependency creates significant security risks, as temporary staff may inadvertently access sensitive information, increasing the potential for fraud and breaches. The high customer-to-employee ratio intensifies pressure on officers', leading to burnout and affecting both their mental and physical health.

The continued neglect of the banks to address the requirement of adequate staff and officers for effectively running the banking operations smoothly and effectively and for preventing fraud and cyber crimes has given rise to the urgent need for recruitment of regular employees in PSBs.

Regularise temporary employees: In the absence of adequate recruitments in the Banks and virtual bank on recruitment of substaff and housekeeping staff, in almost all the Branches, employees are engaged on temporary basis. These temporary employees are working in the branches for years together. But they are permanently temporary. The very fact that Banks and Branches are employing these temporary employees explains the shortage of staff in branches and the need for recruitment of permanent employees. While doing so, these temporary employees need to be regularized.

2. Implementation of 5 Days Working Per Week : Bipartite Settlement/ Joint Note was signed by the Indian Banks' Association with the Employees Unions and Officers Organisations in the Banks on 8-3-2024 covering revision of wages and improvements in other service conditions for the period from 1-11-2022 to 31-10-2027 and

In every round of negotiations, the unions/ associations unequivocally demanded that IBA

should ensure that 5-day work week would be implemented before the signing of the final settlement and

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the unions/ associations and the Indian Banks' Association on 7-12-2023, where it was written that the recommendation for declaring all Saturdays as holidays under the NI Act for Banking Industry in line with earlier negotiations with unions/ associations had already been sent to the Govt. The unions/ associations urged for implementation of the same before signing of the final bipartite Agreement/ Joint Note.

It was agreed in the Settlement/Joint Note dated 8.3.2024 that in terms of understanding dated 7th December, 2023, reached between IBA and Unions/ Associations for declaration of all Saturdays as holidays under Negotiable Instrument Act for Banking Industry, IBA has accordingly recommended to the Government and the due changes in the working hours will be effective after approval by the Government of India and necessary clearances from Government/Reserve Bank of India.

It is more than an year that the IBA has recommended to the Government and till date the approval has not been received. Hence we seek your intervention to approve and introduce the same at the earliest.

3. Violation of bilateral agreement: The Performance Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme was introduced in the Banks under the last Settlement signed between IBA and Unions/Associations in 2020. The Scheme covered all workmen employees and all Officers from Scale I to Scale VII. This PLI Scheme has been introduced after detailed discussions between the parties based on mandates provided by member Banks' Boards. During the year 2024, the PLI scheme has been modified improved upon by further mutual discussions and minutised between the parties.

Whereas the DFS Notification No. eF No. 15/6/ 2024-BO.I dated 19.11.2024 violates the accepted principle of equity and undermines this well-established framework, violating the sanctity of collective bargaining and the bilateral settlements and introduced a selective approach to incentivise only officers from Scale IV to VIII (counting less than 5% of the total workforce), while excluding over

95% of employees who primarily drive business at the field level. It risks fragmentation of the workforce and impairing the collective growth and harmony, which is paramount and essential for any organizational growth and sustainable success.

Besides the DFS directive which amounts to violate the collectively bargain PLI scheme uniformly applicable to entire workforce from part time sweepers to General Managers of the Banks with uniform rate of incentive for all, it also will result in huge inequity and differentiation in the incentive by extend a highly disproportionate incentive model for a small section of the workforce. Uniformity of the incentive will be the casualty. If the scheme needs any review, UFBU is ready to re-negotiate the same but unilateral and discriminatory change in the scheme is unfair and unacceptable.

4. Efficiency Review: DFS has sent a directive to all Banks on 26-9-2024 asking them to review the efficiency of all employees and officers on reaching the age of 55/57/58 and submit the report of the review report to the Government every month. This policy not only infringes upon the operational autonomy of banks but also undermines the morale and job security of dedicated Bank employees and Officers across the country. We stand firm against any initiative that jeopardizes the career stability of bank staff. We are for efficiency workforce and there are adequate safeguards and rules evolved through bilateral agreements to ensure the same. Government directive is nothing but intimidation of the employees and officers.

The PSBs are already facing severe staff shortages, exacerbated by the lack of recruitment in clerical and sub-staff cadres, this DFS directive threatens the very sustainability of the industry. Adding further stress to an overstretched workforce, the policy requires banks to undertake monthly reviews and submit reports detailing the number of employees reviewed and retired prematurely, a step that will severely detract the attention from core banking operations.

The directive also undermines established mechanisms, including the Bipartite Settlements and Officers' Service Regulations, which provide comprehensive provisions to address performance-related concerns without resorting to arbitrary dismissals, under the new mandate, officers face premature retirement with a three-month notice

period (or pay in lieu), while clerks and sub-staff receive only a two-month notice. Such unilateral measures are both provocative and intimidating, disregarding existing processes for handling employee performance fairly.

Such directive from the Department of Financial Services has undermined the sanctity of the bilateral provisions of service conditions and tantamount to interference in the internal autonomy of the Bank Boards and such arbitrary action of the Government is one of the reasons for the unrest amongst the bank staff.

5. Increasing assaults on Bank Managers/officers/other staff: Bank employees are increasingly facing verbal and physical assaults while performing their duties, often at the hands of unruly elements, sometimes even backed by political forces, and these incidents not only compromise their safety but also disrupt essential banking services. Reports of physical attacks on bankers have been on the rise, with staff frequently threatened while on duty which is being further exacerbated by the reduced workforce.

Despite the advisories from the Department of Financial Services, Government of India, urging strong action against such behavior, these incidents persist nationwide. In several cases, officers are coerced into avoiding recovery actions or sanctioning loans without the required compliance from borrowers. Recent violent episodes in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Gujarat, Bihar and other states have escalated, leaving bank Managers, officers and other staff feeling helpless and demotivated, severely impacting their ability to fulfil their duties.

In the light of these grave concerns, an enactment of a stringent legal framework is required and there should be dedicated Act safeguarding bankers from physical harm and undue pressure related to their professional duties encompassing the coverage of the provisions under Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) that protects Public Servants from similar abuse and threats, as listed below:

- * BNS Section 332 - Voluntarily causing hurt to deter public servant from his duty.
- * BNS Section 121(2) - Assault While Performing Official Duty.

- * BNS Section 132 - Assault or criminal force to deter a public servant from discharging their duty.
- * BNS Section 219 - Obstructing sale of property offered by authority of public servant for sale.
- * BNS Section 221 - Obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions, Interrupting Government Work by Insult or Misbehaviour
- * BNS Section 224 - Threat of injury to public servant

Our demand for protective measures for bank staff against assaults and enactment of legal provisions for our safety in Branches is another important.

6. Fill up the posts of Workman/Officer Directors in PSBs: The appointments of Workmen Employee/Officer Employee Directors to the Boards of Banks remain pending for a decade, despite clear legal mandates, judicial directives. The provisions of The State Bank of India Act, 1955, and the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act of 1970/1980 mandate the inclusion of one Workman Director and one Officer Director on the Boards of SBI and all nationalized banks. This provision is further reinforced in the Nationalized Banks (Management and Miscellaneous Provisions) Scheme, 1970.

The Department of Financial Services (DFS) has been repeatedly approached to expedite the appointment process to ensure adherence to statutory and legal provisions, promoting an inclusive governance structure across public sector banks. Unfortunately, even then, the posts of Workman Employee/Officer Employee Directors in all the 12 PSBs remain unfilled. This is yet another important demand

7. Convert all employees/covered by NPS to OPS : Pension is not merely a retirement benefit; it is essentially a social security measure designed to provide financial stability and dignity in post-retirement years, whereas the NPS, being a market-driven scheme, has shown inconsistent returns subject to market fluctuations, leading to unpredictability and financial vulnerability for retirees. Further it is also a contributory scheme. With inflation and living costs

continuing to rise unabated, a pension scheme unlinked to D.A. neutralization will severely impact the quality of life for retired bank employees covered under NPS, who deserve stability and security in their retirement.

These issues have been raised before the Government and IBA/Managements for an umpteen number of times, and the failure of the IBA and the Government of India to address the justified demand and restore the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme for post-2010 bank employees/officers, has given rise to unrest amongst the employees and we urge upon the Government to consider the same positively.

8. Updation of Pension for existing pensioners: We have been demanding periodical updating of pension along with wage revision settlement and it was agreed that without prejudice to the Court cases in various litigations relating to pension scheme including the demand for updating of pension, for pensioners up to 31.10.2022 an ex-gratia shall be paid which would be due for review in April 2024. It was also agreed that there shall be annual review of the ex-gratia amount as may be mutually agreed between IBA and the union/association. Now, there is no discussion initiated by IBA either for review of ex-gratia amount or for developing a framework of periodical pension updating as demanded without prejudice to the Court cases. Hence it is very important issue that required the immediate attention of the Government

9. Improvement in Gratuity under the Act and exemption from Income Tax : Gratuity is a statutory retirement benefit provided to employees as a token of appreciation for their service and loyalty to the organization. Over the years, the Government of India has periodically revised the gratuity ceiling, the latest being Rs. 20 lakhs under the Payment of Gratuity (Amendment) Act, 2018. However, this ceiling remains lower compared to the benefits provided to government employees under the Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, where gratuity is capped at Rs. 25 lakhs, along with a full exemption from income tax.

Government employees enjoy a higher gratuity

ceiling of Rs. 25 lakhs with no income tax liability. The banking sector has consistently contributed to the nation's progress, implementing government schemes, expanding financial inclusion, and delivering critical services even in challenging conditions. The sector's employees and officers deserve recognition through better retirement benefits. With the increasing cost of living and inflation, the current ceiling of Rs. 20 lakhs does not adequately compensate employees upon retirement. Raising the limit to Rs. 25 lakhs would provide greater financial security in post-retirement life.

Gratuity is a one-time benefit earned over decades of service. Subjecting it to income tax is inequitable and diminishes the value of the benefit. Government employees already enjoy tax exemption, and this principle should extend to all employees, including bank officers and award staff. The absence of appropriate amendments to the Gratuity Act has caused widespread dissatisfaction among bank employees.

We have been demanding the appropriate amendments to the Payment of Gratuity Act **increasing the ceiling on Gratuity from Rs. 20 lakhs to Rs. 25 lakhs and exempt the entire gratuity amount from income tax** to ensure employees receive the full benefit of their service. Hence it is an important issue confronting the bank employees and officers.

10. Need to exempt staff welfare oriented benefits from the purview of perquisite and consequent Tax: Whereas, every profession offers specific benefits tailored to its nature. Across sectors, such perks are legitimate, remain untaxed, and form an integral part of employment packages. These benefits not only attract India's brightest minds but also help organizations hire the best talent. In the financial sector, the liability of income tax on perquisites borne by the bank is a motivating factor for employees, encouraging them to contribute more effectively to the organization.

It is important to note that many employers provide in-house products or services either free of cost or at subsidized rates to their employees like in railways, airlines, telecom companies, schools, hospitals, etc., where the staff get certain concessional benefits which are not treated as perks

and hence not taxed. These are ways of how employers extend such benefits to their workforce. Given that the banking sector deals primarily with financial products, it is only reasonable that similar privileges, such as concessional loans, are extended to us.

It is pertinent to highlight that the cost of delivery for staff loans is minimal since these loans require no publicity or marketing and are fully secured through mechanisms like a lien on superannuation benefits or insurance coverage. Furthermore, these loans entail no recovery costs, as repayment is directly deducted from employees' salaries.

Among the limited benefits enjoyed by bank employees, concessional staff loans play a critical role in ensuring financial stability, especially given the high-stress conditions of their work environment. Taxing this singular benefit, while similar perks in other sectors remain untaxed, is both arbitrary and unjust. These benefits are not handouts but rather a part of the crop harvested by employees, provided to them on concessional terms.

We, therefore, demand that such concessional staff loans and staff welfare related benefits be exempted from the ambit of perquisite taxation.

11. DO NOT privatise IDBI Bank – Maintain minimum of 51% of capital with Government: IDBI was made a specialised Bank to deal with long term needs of the industries and has done yeoman services. Later, this has been converted as IDBI Bank as a regular commercial Bank. It has been assured on the floor of the Parliament that at any point of time, the Government shall maintain a minimum of 51% of the capital of the Bank with itself. Today Government and LIC put together has the capital upto 95%. There are repeated reports that the Governments wants to disinvest in this Bank and more than 51% of the shares would be divested. This would obviously mean privatisation of IDB Bank and would be against the assurances made on the floor of the Parliament by the then Finance minister. We seek your attention to this important issue.

12. Micromanagement of PSBs on IR related issues : We express our deep concern and misgivings over the increasing intervention by the

Department of Financial Services (DFS) in the routine affairs of Public Sector Banks, leading to excessive micromanagement.

During the Gyan Sangam held at Pune on 2nd and 3rd January 2015 the Hon'ble Prime Minister of the country had said that "Banks would be run professionally, and there would be no interference". It was also decided that the Bank's Board should be given full autonomy on HR decisions such as on recruitment, Consequence management and Compensation. This was extensively covered by the Print and electronic media and the decision was welcomed across the board. The department of financial services vide its office memorandum no F.No.4/9/1/2014-IR (Pt.) dated 13th January 2015 has also emphasised on the same and the brief extract of the communication says

" The undersigned is directed to refer to the subject cited above and to say that Gyan Sangam was recently held on 2-3 January, 2015 at Pune where the Hon'ble Prime Minister interacted with the Chief Executives of Public Sector Banks and Financial Institutions (PSBs/ Fis). During the discussion, it was conveyed from the highest level in very clear terms that the Government will not interfere in the working of the Banks/ FIs."

The current directive, which prescribes how senior officers should perform and prioritize their work to earn incentives, surely infringes upon the autonomy of public sector banks. The directive to periodic performance review upon attaining certain age disregards the governance structures of banks' Boards and imposes centralized control, which could stifle strategic decision-making aligned with individual banks' unique challenges.

Such micro-management by the Government sets a negative precedence, undermining the independence of functions of the boards of the public sector banks. Particularly, when the directives or instructions from the DFS infringes policies or schemes evolved by collective bargaining and bilateral agreements concerning the employees and officers, it becomes an industrial dispute and hence avoidable.

We have also come across instructions from DFS which amounts to declining the trade unions

available to employees and officers to join the trade union of their choice and curbing the same would amount to unfair labour practice. For example, the directive from DFS discouraging and barring senior management employees (SMGS-IV and above) from being part of Associations with other officers is a blatant infringement of Article 19(1)(c) of the Constitution of India, which guarantees every citizen the fundamental right to form and participate in associations or unions. Trade Unions Act, 1926 also enables the same right. Hence this is also an important issue in the strike notice.

The DFS directive to alter the protection granted to office bearers of recognised trade unions on promotion is a clear case of interference in the autonomy of unions and associations. Such actions amount to unfair labour practices as defined under the Industrial Disputes Act and the Industrial Relations Code. These protections are not privileges but safeguards essential to ensure free and fair functioning of trade unions, enabling them to represent the workforce effectively. The directives issued by the DFS not only challenge the rights of employees but also aim to dilute the collective bargaining of unions and associations. These actions are contrary to the principles of industrial harmony and undermine the relationship between management and employees.

13. Stop outsourcing regular jobs in Banks:

In the absence of recruitment and employment of permanent employees in the Banks, the management of the Banks are attempting to outsource these regular jobs on contractual basis. There are subsisting regular jobs and hence have to be filled up by recruitment of permanent employees. Recruitment of employees is part of the service conditions in the Banks under the Awards and Bipartite Settlements. Without reaching a mutually acceptable norms and practices, outsourcing the regular and perennial jobs in the Banks is violation of these provisions. Further, outsourcing the bank jobs is also wrought with serious implications. Hence the current attempts to outsource the regular jobs in the banks should be stopped and the vacancies should be filled up through recruitment of staff.

Thanking you,

Sd/-

**General Secretaries of the UFBU Constituents
Members are advised to take note of the same.**

STATE BANK OF INDIA OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION, JAIPUR CIRCLE- REPORT ON 4TH TRIENNIAL GENERAL COUNCIL

The 4th General Body Meeting of SBIOA Jaipur Circle held on 25th January 2025 at the Birla Auditorium, Jaipur, culminated with a resounding success, registering a conglomeration of more than 2000 officers showcasing a demonstrative manifestation of solidarity and strength. The grand event commemorated in the "Pink City" was attended by officers congregating from all across the length and breadth of the State reflecting the true legacy of the trade union movement that the circle is conspicuous for.



2. The event kickstarted with a devotional Ganesh Vandana, an eye-soothing dance performance, Kalbeliya with the blend of Ghoomer, the famous Classical dance of the state of Rajasthan that notched international fame. Comrade Dharamveer Singh Bhatia a young activist of the Circle Association, who anchored the Opening Session, welcomed Comrade Ramavtar Singh Jakhar, President of the circle and Comrade Vinay Bhalla, the Chairman, All India State Bank Officers' Federation & General Secretary of the Circle Association, on the dais amidst sky rocketing slogans and huge applause from all around. Both the leaders welcomed the dignitaries on the dais with the traditional 'Safa', 'Uttorio', plant pot & memento juxtaposing warmth from core of their hearts.

3. The welcome ceremony followed by lighting of the lamp by the dignitaries on the dais and a brief felicitation of Returning Officers, former leaders, ex-office bearers of SBIOA Jaipur Circle & Office bearers of SBI Pensioners association.



4. Com. Vinay Bhalla, Chairman AISBOF & General Secretary SBIOA Jaipur Circle, in his opening address, welcomed all the Guests and leaders and spoke on various issues such as work-life balance, 5 days' work week, wage revision and residual issues of 9th Joint Note. He claimed the assembly being more than formal but also demonstrative in terms of solidarity and unity of the fraternity that vouch achieving the collective goals. Touching upon circle-based issues, Comrade Bhalla claimed the uniqueness of Circle Transfer Policy which has been fetching benefits to the officers as well as the bank. Emphasizing on the bank being paramount, he stressed on maintenance of professionalism & commitment at workplace with ethics at its core. He briefly touched upon the major activities and achievements of the Circle Association and highlighted the various issues taken up during the Circle Negotiating Committee meetings. He informed that there are many issues concerning officers, which he felt being the part of the business session and requested the members to actively participate and be interactive.

5. Com. Ramavtar Singh Jakhar, the president of the meeting emphasised on unity as a measure to consolidate our strength and go for clinching the best. He stressed to be resolute defying vagary of circumstances and uphold and further the perpetuity of our collective struggle.

6. Shri. Sandeep Bhatnagar, the Chief General Manager of the Circle & Chief Guest of the event expressed his happiness on being part of the conglomeration. He, while delving on the issues confronted by the bank, touched upon, market share, CASA deposits, Customer Service, Technology, upgradation of knowledge, infrastructure in branches, and work-life balance while asserting that the bank is in safe hands and

OUR LIFE IS WHAT OUR THOUGHTS MAKE IT



with collective effort, we can achieve uncharted laurels for the bank. He exhorted before the gathering to fulfil customer expectations and ensure customers' trust to cruise ahead of the competition. He concluded with nurturing hope that happiness shall roam all around in employee's life while wishing an all-around success of the General Body meeting. His eloquent speech found mention highlighting the contribution of Comrade Vinay Bhalla for his dedication and commitment to the officer's fraternity. He expressed deep admiration on the power of pen and drafting capability of comrade Bhalla and applauded his contribution towards improving the lives of his members. He wished Comrade Bhalla a happy, healthy second inning of his life.

7. The undersigned started with extending a heartfelt congratulations to SBIOA Jaipur Circle for successfully organizing the General Body Meeting and for coming victorious in an unopposed election showcasing the confidence that the circle association commands over its members.

8. The undersigned spoke on the solidarity of Team Jaipur and also highlighted on the successful conclusion of the recent wage negotiation process. He assured the members that AIBOC remains committed in addressing their aspirations while ensuring a positive and happy work environment. He elaborated on recent developments relating to deduction of TDS on perks and the crucial role played by the association in resolving such matters in an amicable way.

9. The undersigned emphasized that SBI, has always provided the best industry standards and cares for its employees reminiscent to a mother that takes care of her child and as our responsibility, we need to reciprocate the same in our pursuit to maintain professionalism and walk extra miles to avoid stain



tarnishing the image of the bank especially in social media. He reiterated AIBOC's role in advocating for citizenry in general, public sector banks, and officers' rights. His speech covered key aspects of the 9th Joint Note, including DA formula and stagnation increments, apart from a call of preparedness for the ensuing struggle demanding implementation of five-day work week in Banking industry. He reiterated on the importance of upholding the dignity and respect of every officer, advocating for a culture of mutual respect and collaboration.

10. While flashing light on the Journey of Comrade Vinay Bhalla, the undersigned pitched high on his leadership quality terming him as a visionary leader and applauded the contributions he made in steering the Circle association after evolution of a new circle towards greater heights along with ensuring sustained progress amidst uncharted challenges. He concluded by highlighting that Com Bhalla has all along been a sincere leader with inherent attribute of amiable charms while wishing him a happy, healthy and contended retired life ahead.

11. Comrade Arun Bishoyi, President of AISBOF conveyed sincere appreciation to the disciplined gathering and for their unconditional trust in the



leadership of SBIOA, AISBOF, and AIBOC. He highlighted significant milestones achieved through the recent Joint Note, which encompassed crucial benefits like stagnation increments and improved work conditions. He emphasized that AISBOF and AIBOC will continue to lead the nation's transformation towards greater financial inclusion and digitization while firmly upholding the principles of fairness, equity, and professionalism, ensuring inclusive socio-economic growth.

12. Guest of Honour, Shri Madan L S, General Manager Network-II Jaipur addressed the gathering and shared his experience as DGM & Circle Development Officer at Guwahati Circle. He spoke on the need of cementing customer connect, to relate and to build a strong network with customers as customer satisfaction has been the long-standing motto of our bank. He urged upon the assembly to strive, retain and improve the reputation of our Bank. He concluded by wishing Comrade Vinay Bhalla on his retirement on 31st January 2025 and his altruistic contribution which will be cherished in

the history of SBIOA as well in the Bank.

13. Guest of Honour, Shri Pradeep Kumar Sharma, General Manager, Circle Audit Office, Jaipur started with an excerpt from a poem of Shri Ravidas, highlighting the importance of unity. He stressed on the need to be united, as the core strength of the association comes from its members only. He congratulated Comrade Bhalla on his retirement on 31st January 2025 and considered it to be a matter of blessings to have a gem like Comrade Bhalla amidst.

14. Com. D P Verma, Sr. Vice President, SBIOA Jaipur Circle delivered the Vote of Thanks, expressing gratitude to the Circle Management, Presidents, and General Secretaries of other Circle Associations, guests, and all members for making the event a grand success.

15. The day-long extravaganza culminated with a resolution for greater unity, promising greater heights with a greater proclamation of camaraderie and solidarity forever. ■

STATE BANK OF INDIA OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION, NORTHEASTERN CIRCLE REPORT ON 32ND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

On the eventful day of February 8th, the vibrant city of Guwahati became the backdrop for a momentous 32nd Annual General Meeting of SBIOA (NE Circle) where more than 1500 officers from all across the seven North-Eastern states, popularly known as "Seven Sisters" converged at SBOA Public School, the condominium, just reminiscent to tributaries flowing from different sources merging into the mighty Brahmaputra.



2. The day-long event kickstarted with unfurling of the SBIOA (NE Circle) flag where the Circle President, General Secretary, dignitaries and leaders from different Circles shared hands and re-affirmed their allegiance to the organization as



well as to the cause of Trade Union Movement. The atmosphere all around had been electrifying with sky rocketing slogans registering a promising start of the event. The leaders and dignitaries were then guided to the auditorium where thousands of enthusiastic members, found ready to welcome the guests and the leaderships alike. It was a majestic outfit that adorned the grace and solemnity of the North-Eastern India giving the hall a hue of emotional touch for being something own. The stage was named after one of its most galactic leaders, late Comrade Kashinath Hazarika the former President and General Secretary of the Circle.

3. The open session of the event commenced with an engaging and mesmerizing performance of chorus followed by a captivating dance by the students of SBOA Public School, Guwahati, that enthralled the entire audience and set out the tune of the mammoth commemoration.



4. It was the turn of the President and the General Secretary of the Circle then to shower their warmth and humble gesture while offering felicitation to the dignitaries, former office bearers of SBIOA (NE Circle), executives and guests, the rendition from two anchors just matched the chord followed by the ceremonious lighting of lamp invoking the sanctum of divinity which got its fulfilment through offering a floral tribute to the Noble Soul of Comrade Kashinath Hazarika. The welcome address was then delivered by Com Sanjib Sen, DGS (HQ), SBIOA (NE Circle) wherein he unfolded with the history of the Circle and extended a hearty welcome to all the dignitaries and guests assembled for the event. The presence of Comrade Vinay Bhalla the former chairman of the federation, wife of Late Comrade Hazarika and his son also added glitter to the grace of the occasion that with all its hue and splendor promised to be a lasting memory for all.

5.. The Hon'ble Chief General Manager of the Circle, Shri Sahadevan Radhakrishnan expressed regret for not being able to attend the meeting because of his official commitment necessitating him

to go out of station. He shared his thoughts through a video clip where he addressed and greeted everyone on the very special occasion. The circle head elaborately delved on Bank's concerns for business growth and the importance of contribution from each and every employee for the Circle's growth. Requesting everyone to concentrate in improving the Bank's market share, he winded up wishing great success of the event.

6. Shri Dhruva Charan Bal, General Manager, NW-2, the Chief Guest for the meeting, spoke on the



present banking scenario and the need for collective efforts to improve market share. He requested for ensuring compliance culture, avoid short cuts and remain vigilant to prevent frauds. Talking high on the demographic features and beauty of North-East, he concluded wishing the meeting a grand success.

7. Shri Arun Kumar Bishoyi, President (AISBOF) & General Secretary, SBIOA, Bhubaneshwar Circle



thanked and complemented the leaders and organizers of the NE Circle for the tremendous arrangement demonstrating the love and trust of the members towards the association. He delved upon the importance of unity in the Association and reminisced on the visions of the leaders of yesteryears and implored the gathering to remember

their sacrifices and carry on the good work they have done. He mentioned about the achievements of the 9th Joint Note and the challenges ahead on issues like 5-days work week, adequate recruitment and the biased PLI scheme. He emphasized the importance of workplace happiness as happy employees contribute more to the bank. He urged everyone to stand against injustice, follow the Bank's System & Procedure to avoid issues, and prioritize their health. He also expressed confidence in the young NE team, believing they will drive future progress for both the bank and the association, and extended his best wishes to them.

8. Shri Shyamanta Konwar, GS, SBISA (NE Circle) shared his thoughts on issues concerning the Bankers. He thanked SBIOA (NE Circle) for the continuous support provided to SBISA by conducting awareness camps in various centers across North East for recruitment of Junior Associates. He also congratulated the organizers on the successful conduct of the meeting.

9. Com Nilesh Radia, Senior Vice President, AISBOF & President, SBIOA Ahmedabad Circle, thanked Com Rupam Roy for giving him the opportunity to address the gathering. Quoting the Valentine week, he invoked the blessing of Maa Kamakhya for all the members and their families. He highlighted the contribution of Com Rupam Roy, as a "leader of the leaders", for the historic 9th Joint Note and clinching the Special Pay for officers. He spelled optimism on the various pending issues and the proposed agitational programme. Complimenting the performance of the school students, he salutes the vision of the past leaders of the circle and appreciated the current leadership for carrying forward the legacy to greater heights.

10. Com G. Kishore Kumar, Senior Vice President, AISBOF & General Secretary, SBIOA, Amravati circle in his address to the gathering, congratulated all for the humongous presence of members in the meeting coming from across the seven states of North East. He appreciated SBIOA (NE Circle) for the initiative taken for imparting knowledge and education to children through SBOA Public School. He mentioned about the attributes of Com Rupam Roy who according to him is a different type of leader who always fights for the benefit of the members. He stated that the struggle for our demands has begun and urged everyone to support the Association in achieving them. He also mentioned that, under Com Roy's leadership, we

will succeed in meeting these goals as well.

11. The Guest of honor, Com Bhupen Kalita, General Secretary of the SBI Pensioners Association (NE Circle) extended his warm greetings and expressed his gratitude for the invitation extended to the SBI Pensioners' Association of NE Circle. He also shared his expectations from the current leaders of both the Officers' and Staff Associations, emphasizing that the demands of the pensioners can be met with through the efforts of these two organizations. He spoke at length about late Com RN Godbole Former GS of Officers' Federation and Com P Laxminarasiah, Former GS of Staff Federation who took initiative for joint forum which shaped UFBU. He also spoke on the challenges faced in the country and the need to protect our rights. He mourned the demise of Late Com Kashi Nath Hazarika and Late Com Shyamal Chakraborty and mentioned about their contributions and the contributions of other former and present leaders for making SBOA Public School one of the best schools in this part of the country. He wished that the Association under the able leadership of Com Rupam Roy shine brighter in the coming days and concluded with revolutionary slogans.

12. Com Vinay K Bhalla, former Chairman, AISBOF in his brief speech congratulated the Circle Association for the grand success of this 32nd Annual General Meeting and requested all to carry forward this positive vibe of togetherness in the days to come under the able leadership of Com Rupam Roy so that more laurels can be achieved.

13. The undersigned in his elaborated speech mentioned about the achievements of the last Joint Note and enlightened the house on various benefits clinched in the last salary revision. He discussed the latest industry-level developments and explained how we secured regulated working hours through the implementation of Half-Day CL. He also emphasized his commitment to ensuring that officers lead a dignified life and that the bank prioritizes adequate recruitment. He also stressed on various benefits including sick leave for medical treatment of spouse, duty relief for Defence Representatives (DR). He appreciated Chairman's thoughts on misbehavior on which Chairman has expressed that no misbehavior will be tolerated. He deliberated on Market Share and expressed his concerns on the challenges lying ahead comparing the market share with private banks and Non-Banking Finance Companies for which he earnestly requested

everyone to work sincerely for the Bank to increase the market share. He stated about the demand of reinstating the Old Pension scheme instead of NPS and UPS which is in the agenda of our demands along with filling up the post of Workmen/ Officer Director. He also denounced the new incentive scheme of DFS for scale IV and above. Lastly, he thanked all the leaders coming from across the country for sharing their insights and the volunteers for working day and night to make this meeting a grand success. He concluded by adjuring everyone to participate in the upcoming Strike called by UFBU and to make it a historic success.

14. Com TAP Paul, President, SBIOA (NE Circle) offered his thanks to almighty God for the blessings bestowed on all present in this 32nd Annual General

Meeting. He acknowledged the collective effort and dedication of the comrades of NE Circle for a mammoth gathering, paid respect and homage to the founders and past leaders of Circle Association for their vision, sacrifices and perseverance for which today the Association stands firm and compelled. He also acknowledged the sacrifices of the family members who stood by the leaders during tough times and reconciled hardships while assisting leaders render their duty for the welfare of the members. He also thanked the past leaders, SBOA public school team, media team, volunteers and all the members for the remarkable event.

15. The open session marked a befitting culmination with a promise to make the business session equally participative and captivating with members' issues at the core. ■



24TH GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING OF SBIOA (PATNA CIRCLE) HISTORY RECREATED AND SURPASSED

The eventful day of 16th February, 2025 scripted yet another success story in the pages of glorious chapter of SBIOA Patna Circle with a successful commemoration of the 24th General Council that witnessed an assembly of over 3000 enthusiastic agglomerates deluging the floor of S.K. Memorial Hall with their presence from nooks and corners of the states of Bihar and Jharkhand.



02. The atmosphere surrounding the S. K. Memorial hall, rechristened as "Com Ajoy Das Nagar" in remembrance of ex-President of Bhagalpur Zone was electrifying on account of sky renting slogans all around amidst the bursting beats of "Dhol & Nagadas". All the streets of the venue were speckled



BE TRUTHFUL , BE FEARLESS

with posters, slogan hoardings & flags. Leaders from all the affiliates across the country and senior functionaries of the bank were given an intense welcome juxtaposed with enthusiasm and a stint of camaraderie mixed with the warmth of exuberance. The event was set on motion with hoisting of the Association Flag by the honourable, Chief General Manager, Shri K.V. Bangarraju, amidst the august presence of Com Arun Kumar Bishoyi, President AISBOF, Com Arijit Bose, Com Amaresh Vikramaditya, the President and General Secretary of SBIOA Patna Circle, leaders of other affiliates, CMC members and the undersigned. The timepiece however was incarcerated with a splendid performance of Nukkad Natak showcasing the socio-political essence and flavour of genesis.



03. The stage of "Com Ajoy Das Nagar" was named after "Com L.K.P. Singh" as a mark of reverence to the ex-President of SBIOA Patna. It was then the students from "Sister Nivedita Girls School" who added a stint of serenity to the event with their melodious renditions signing in for a stunning take off of the event. The undersigned during the occasion promised a token money of Rs 1 lakh from AIBOC to be paid to Nayi Dharti" the NGO taking care of the downtrodden and destitute girl child as a fulfilment of Association's commitment towards social cause.

04. Amidst thunderous claps and strident slogans, the guests were welcomed to the dais and warmth of felicitations were exchanged by the Circle President and the General Secretary. Apart from federation luminaries, ex- office bearers, the personalities like the Chief Guest of the event, Shri K.V. Bangarraju, CGM Patna, Shri Mrityunjay Kumar Singh, President, Bihar Police Association, Ajeet Singh, Secretary, Bihar Judicial Services Association, senior executives of the Bank were the luminaries who glorified the event with their gracious presence.

05. Whole-hearted felicitation offered to "Padma

Shri" Ashok Kumar Biswas, a renowned folk artist from Bihar and for his special contribution towards development and propagation of folk art of the state. The Founder Secretary of NGO "Nayi Dharti", Smt. Nandita Banarjee" was also felicitated along with President of the NGO, Smt. Jayati Singh. It was an emotional moment to felicitate the better halves of Com Ajoy Das, ex-President Bhagalpur Zone & Com Rupesh Srivastava, ex-Organizing Secretary. It was again nostalgic to offer felicitation to Com Kamlakar Singh & Com Ajit Kumar Mishra, the ex-President & General Secretary of SBIOA Patna Circle.

06. The felicitation program was followed by lighting of the lamp by the Chief Guest joined by other dignitaries which was followed by floral tributes paid to two departed souls by whose name the stage and the vicinity was rechristened. The dignitaries on the dais then unveiled an in-house publication of SBIOA Patna, namely, a book on SME Advances to aid assistance to the functionaries dealing in SME Advances.

07. Comrade, Amaresh Vikramaditya the General Secretary in his welcome address expressed deep gratitude to all the leaders for continuously supporting and guiding him. He specifically expressed his gratitude and thankfulness to Com Kamlakar Singh & Com Ajit Kumar Mishra for their continuous guidance and mentorship. Emphasizing on the importance of "work-life balance" he re-iterated his commitment. He urged the members to maintain highest standard of ethics in their dealings while re-affirming his commitment to see that the interest of innocents is protected by any means.

08. Shri K.V. Bangarraju, CGM Patna and the chief guest of the meeting, stressed deep on importance



of maintenance of a good health while expressing his staunch advocacy for "work-life balance". He expressed his intolerance on misbehavior, either involving customers or the employees. Denouncing

insalubrious competition and rankings, he expressed his reliance on sustained, healthy and ethical growth. The Circle CGM urged the assembly to focus on prompt and empathetic Customer Service. Claiming SBI to be one of the best employers, the chief guest expected a reciprocative approach from the employees as well.

09. Shri Mrityunjay Kumar Singh, President of Bihar Police Association, felt pride in sharing his long and fruitful relationship with State Bank of India and appreciated the prompt and responsive service provided by the bank. He also praised the technology and products on offer by our bank and emphasized on sustained relationships. He talked high on the noble works being done by SBIOA Patna Circle while appreciating the leaderships for their untiring efforts.

10. Shri Ajit Singh, General Secretary of Bihar Judicial Services Association, applauded the efficient and customer centric products and services offered by SBI. He stated that the massive gathering attending the General Council of SBIOA Patna was a demonstrative in terms of unity and solidarity. He requested the Circle CGM to consider provision of Staff Quarters by the bank at all district headquarters facilitating employees stay and avoid travelling long distances.

11. Com Arun Kumar Bishoyi, President of AISBOF talked high on the efforts made by the Circle Association towards commemoration of a glorious



event with special mention to the hall full of participants that actually added laurels to labour.

Com President urged the members to stay united and fight collectively for the cause of collective good. He reminded the members about the demands of the Association and the upcoming strike call on 24th and 25th of March 2025 given by UFBU while requesting the members for a whole hearted participation in all the programs chalked out by UFBU leading to the strike and leave no stone unturned to make it a grand success.

12. The undersigned started with congratulating SBIOA (Patna Circle) for a successful



commemoration of its 24th General Council and thanked the assembly for their presence in such a huge number while delving with issues like role of Association and its contribution towards progress of the bank. It was a vociferous assertion expressing zero tolerance on the issue of dignity of officers and Association's stand on toxic work culture where the Bank Chairman also on the same page. Talking on mental peace and importance of maintaining a sound health, the undersigned stressed on work-place happiness grading it paramount amongst the work-place priorities. The undersigned then delved with the residual issues of 9th Joint Note along with issues with which the long-drawn agitation including strike actions have been chalked out. He then informed the house on the development as regards to the guest house at Mumbai proposed to be purchased by the SBIOA Patna Circle and congratulated the Circle functionaries for their noble initiative. Stressing on maintenance of honesty and ethics, the undersigned assured the memberships that Association shall always stress its best foot forward and walk extra miles to ensure dignity, safety and legitimate progress of its members all the way.

13. The Inaugural Session of the 24th General Council of SBIOA Patna Circle came to its culmination with Presidential address and vote of thanks proposed by Com Arijit Bose, President, SBIOA (Patna Circle). The exuberance and wholehearted involvement of the members and overall atmosphere of the vicinity shall continue alluring our emotion and shall be retained for long. ■



HE WHO SEEKS HAPPINESS BY HURTING WILL NEVER FIND IT

DEARNESS ALLOWANCE FEBRUARY 2025 TO APRIL 2025

The Index Numbers for the quarter ended upto December 2024 are as under:

DA Payable for the Months Feb 2025 to Apr 2025	
Index for Months	Index as per 2016 series
Oct 24	144.50
Nov.24	144.50
Dec.24	143.70
Average	144.23
New DA Rate (over 123.03)	21.20%
DA Rate for Previous Quarter	19.83%
Increase	1.37%

Accordingly, Dearness Allowance is payable to Officers is 21.20% slabs with effect from 01.02.2025. The rates worked out are as per the industry level scales up to Scale VII including SBI.

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- I. Rupam Roy, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Bangaluru
10/03/2025

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GENERAL SECRETARY

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