

EDITORIAL

RAISED RATE, LOWERED SENTIMENT

In his last mid-quarter policy review on December 18, the Reserve Bank of India Governor Raghuram Rajan surprised almost everyone by not hiking interest rates despite the consumer price index (CPI) inflation hitting a record 11.16 per cent in November. He gave two main reasons for not doing so. The first was the “weak state of the economy”. The second pertained to the “merit in waiting for more data”, especially taking into account “indications that vegetable prices may be turning down sharply”. On the data front, the governor was absolutely right. Not only did retail inflation in December fall to 9.87 per cent, vegetable and fruit prices are registering “disinflation”, as the RBI’s policy review has pointed out. As for the state of the economy, Rajan put it most succinctly: The slowdown is getting “increasingly worrisome”, with industrial activity in “contractionary mode” and lead indicators of services also suggesting a “subdued outlook”.

Despite all of this, the governor has, rather than lowering or retaining the RBI’s benchmark repo rate at the current level, chosen to raise it by 25 basis points to 8 per cent. This is unwelcome and a departure from the central bank’s own position in December that was sensitive to the risks to growth from taking an “overly reactive policy action”. Those risks, if anything, have only gone up now even as inflation pressures are receding courtesy a bumper Rabi crop. The rate hike, moreover, sits uneasily with a Centre that is simultaneously resorting to fiscal tightening, which, by the RBI’s own admission, is “likely to exacerbate the weakness in aggregate demand”.

One reason why the RBI may have opted for a rate increase is to signal acceptance of the Urjit Patel committee’s recommendation of making CPI inflation the nominal anchor for monetary policy formulation. But the Patel panel had warned against the “output costs of disinflation”, while setting a one-year time frame for bringing down retail inflation rate to 8 per cent. Given that food and fuel have a combined weight of 57.1 per cent in the CPI — and the RBI has little control over their prices — it is debatable whether a repo rate increase is going to have any effect on inflation 12 months down the line. What

will matter much more is the behaviour of the south-west monsoon. It is also doubtful whether higher interest rates will help contain inflation in the short term; therefore, those who think that a hike may help the UPA's chances in the next Lok Sabha election are harbouring a false hope. But they are certainly not going to help lift investor and consumer sentiment either. The fact that "further policy tightening in the near term is not anticipated at this juncture", as the RBI governor has assured, is the only consolation.

ENRICH YOUR KNOWLEDGE

THE DILEMMA OF 'YES'

Flummoxed, a foreigner asked me in utter incomprehension: "Does it mean 'yes' when you nod your head vertically, or when you shake your head horizontally?" In India, both actions mean "yes", I said. His obvious next question was, "How do you differentiate?" Now, that's not so easy. You have to be culturally ingrained to understand the mind and body language saying yes.

I've deeply observed this 'yes' aspect in the last 10 years in India. My habit in the West has been that people clearly choose to say 'yes' or 'no'. Committing to 'yes' as to be 100% supported by your capability, which you can yourself measure. I've never faced a problem saying 'no' when I don't know. I've noticed that Americans, in particular, become enthusiastic to enlighten me if I say, "I don't know, I want to learn".

A few years ago, in a 360-degree, around the world research I did for a client, I had to meet senior management of diverse Fortune 500 companies to diagnose their industry. My client who'd fixed my meetings said none of the top business leaders had given more than 15 minutes' time. So I accordingly made questions for five minutes only to record them in the next 10 minutes. My questions were so embedded with curiosity that I ended up spending almost two hours with my interviewees. They were engrossed and sincere in parting with knowledge. In a couple of meetings, I even had to beg leave as my next appointment was already scheduled. This vast learning from global business leaders of different industries was indeed helpful for me to present my client with strategic planning inputs that allowed the client's business to move ahead. It proved that if you sincerely admit you want to learn, it's not a defect. It encourages those who teach to unleash their generosity.

In contrast, people in India hesitate to say 'no'. I've analysed eight types of 'yes' saying reasons: Satisfying the hierarchy; respecting elders; complacent arrogance; guilt; escapism; avoiding weakness; fear of expression; baggage of British colonization.

All India RRB Officers' Federation.

"JGGP HOUSE", Raja Rammohan Road, Hakimpara, Siliguri – 734001(West Bengal)

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Satisfying the hierarchy: Saying “Yes Boss” without assessing one’s own capability is very common. A subordinate can be a boss to others, so this lack of capability can cascade down to several subordinate layers. Without substantiating capability, the boss guarantees some delivery to the super-boss. If you’re the super-boss and have slept easy on your subordinate’s commitment, you could be exposing your business to grave danger. The more you delay verifying the reality of that ‘yes’, the more business sedimentation you will create. As a boss in any layer, you have to assess what’s happening behind your subordinate’s ‘yes’ factor. Otherwise, don’t be surprised if things collapse!

Respecting elders: our culture nuance is to revere people older in age, without considering competence. When this stretches to the guru, whether in music, literature or art, a learner has to respect the teacher like a God of boundary less competence, and always be submissive. Both understand the one-way discipline, top down. The guru cannot imagine his disciple can become better, than him yet subliminally, the guru feels insecure.

Complacent arrogance: Just to prove a point, people challengingly say 'yes' even though there's no substance there, just make-believe. This complacent arrogance to temporarily overcome a crisis without considering the long-term impact can have a debilitating impact. Later, when market reality emerges to the contrary, the business takes a hit. Such 'yes' masters disturb Indian industry in both renovation and innovation in product and service.

Guilt: To avoid confrontation, some people say 'yes'. These salaried people guiltily realise they don't have the capability required for the job. So they camouflage the situation with glib, neutral statements that are neither negative nor positive so nobody else discovers their incompetence.

Escapism: It's quite shocking when I hear managers admitting to a market mistake, but in the same breath, happily pointing to their competitors making the same mistake. This amounts to escaping from the problem, shrugging off responsibility for defects, instead of correcting those deficiencies.

Avoiding weakness: Those incompetent at work are the best at glossing the apple. Upholding Indian tradition of obeying the superior, they affirm they've given the right orders. Then they turn around to blame subordinates for non-execution. This very dangerous political game of not owning up to accountability or correcting incompetence takes a company squarely into mediocrity.

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Fear of expression: Our feudal heritage leads to the boss becoming a lion and subordinates having little choice but to say 'yes' to protect their livelihood. Their mundane jobs get scant respect, their craftsmanship no appreciation. They rarely have scope to learn more. Fear of expression is the killer for the bottom and mid-level working force, driving them towards hierarchy deference and impacting operational and maintenance areas of business. If you're oblivious to their hidden reasons, you could be waiting indefinitely without the job being done.

Baggage of British colonisation: Colonial British influence has so weakened our country's backbone as to make the 'yes' very vulnerable. Thankfully, colonial "ji huzoor" no longer works with the sub-30 Zap generation. Let's hope it'll vanish in 10-20 years, making 'yes' more pragmatic. One day, the HR person of a client company where I'd recommended hiring Zappers to contemporaries operations complained to me. He said when the CEO wanted his computer adjusted; he called a 24-year-old IT engineer who fixed it in a jiffy. Then in innocent amazement, the Zapper said, "You're the CEO, and you didn't even know this simple fix?" The CEO was intelligent enough to take his bewilderment positively and appreciated the youngster. But the HR person's attitude was somewhat reminiscent of colonial days. He said these brash Zappers were disturbing the company's work ethic and throwing protocol out of the window.

Source – Officers' Voice, December 2013.

EXCERPTS FROM AIRRBOF CIRCULARS

Circular # 01:2014

2nd January 2014

ALL INDIA BANK STRIKE ON 20TH & 21ST JANUARY, 2014 **UFRRBU DECIDES TO BE PART OF STRIKE ON THE COMMON ISSUES**

In line with the decision of UFBU communicated vide Circular No: 2013/13 dated 24th December, 2013, United Forum of RRB Unions decided to join the strike from 6:00 am of 20th Jan. to 6:00 am of 22nd Jan. 2014 on the common issues as follows:

- ◆ **IMMEDIATE WAGE REVISION**
- ◆ **TO STOP BANKING REFORMS**

UFRRBU is issuing notice to Govt. of India, Ministry of Finance, Dept. of Financial Services as well as Chairmen of RRBs. No separate strike notice need to be issued by any affiliate. The programme as below should be observed in collaboration with constituents of UFBU.

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**All India RRB Strike on 20th & 21st January 2014
PROGRAMMES:**

06-01-2014	Mass Demonstrations before HO of all RRBs
On or before 10-01-2014	Submission of Memorandum by all employees demanding immediate wage revision to Dr. Manmohan Singh, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri P. Chidambaram, Hon'ble Minister of Finance, Government of India and the Chairman, Indian Banks' Association
10/11-01-2014	Rallies, processions at all centres
17-01-2014	Mass Demonstrations, rallies, processions at all centres
17-01-2014 onwards	Badge Wearing
20-01-2014 – 6:00 A.M. TO 22-01- 2014 – 6:00 A.M.	48 hours banks strike in all banks all over the country

Format of Memorandum:

Annexure 1

To
Dr. Manmohan Singh,
Hon'ble Prime Minister,
Government of India,
NEW DELHI.

To
Shri P. Chidambaram,
Hon'ble Minister of Finance,
Government of India,
NEW DELHI.

To
The Chairman,
Indian Banks' Association,
World Trade Centre Complex,
Centre-1, 6th Floor,
Cuffe Parade, MUMBAI.

Respected Sir,

MEMORANDUM

We, the employees and officers working in _____ (Name of the Branch) of _____ (Name of the Bank) submit as under:

Our wages are due for revision from 01.11.2012 as the previous wage settlement signed between the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) and the Workmen Unions & Officers' Associations has expired on 31-10-2012. In order to negotiate the revision of the wages and service conditions of bank employees and officers, all the Unions under the banner of United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU) have submitted common charter of demands in October, 2012. The formal negotiations have started in February, 2013 and till now only 5 rounds of discussions have taken place with IBA. Except agreeing to the date of effect of wage revision and merger of

Please note that:

a. Since the issue involved is wage revision for all sections of employees and officers, all employees and officers including those on probation should participate in the strike.

b. All our affiliates to suitably clarify to those who would retire from Bank service in the next few months to also to take part in the strike since, as per IBA guidelines/pension Regulations, there would be no loss to such employees in calculation of their pension entitlement and that wage revision would benefit all of them..

Comrades, while it would be our endeavour to resolve the demands through mutual discussions, when the response from the IBA and the Government is not positive and satisfactory, there is no other alternative than to carry forward our struggle. Hence all our unions and members are requested to further cement our unity and march on to implement the programmes.

We call upon all our Affiliates/ State Units and members to implement the call of 48 hours strike and make it a grand success so that our anger, anguish and resentment against the illogical, unfair and arbitrary offer of the IBA is expressed. We also request our members to participate in all the agitational programmes prior to strike in large numbers.

Circular # 02:2014

3rd January 2014

**UFRRBU SUBMITS STRIKE NOTICE TO
GOVT. OF INDIA, NABARD & RRB CHAIRMEN - MAKE
THE TWO DAY STRIKE ON 20TH & 21ST JAN. A GRAND SUCCESS**

NOTICE OF STRIKE

**NAME OF UNIONS : UNITED FORUM OF REGIONAL RURAL BANK UNIONS
(UFRRBU)**

- ALL INDIA REGIONAL RURAL BANK OFFICERS FEDERATION(AIRRBOF)
- ALL INDIA REGIONAL RURAL BANK EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION (AIRRBEA)
- ALL INDIA GRAMIN BANK WORKERS ORGANISATION (AIGBWO)

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- ALL INDIA GRAMIN BANK OFFICERS ORGANISATION (AIGBOO)
- ALL INDIA GRAMIN BANK EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION (AIGBEA)
- ALL INDIA GRAMIN BANK OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION (AIGBOA)
- ALL INDIA GRAMIN BANK EMPLOYEES CONGRESS (AIGBEC)
- ALL INDIA GRAMIN BANK OFFICERS CONGRESS (AIGBOC)
- NATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF REGIONAL RURAL BANK EMPLOYEES (NCCRBE)

NAMES OF ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

1. Shri S.K. Bhattacharjee, General Secretary, AIRRBOF
2. Shri M. Syed Khan, General Secretary, AIRRBEA
3. Shri Sudhir Pandey, General Secretary, AIGBWO
4. Shri A.K. Mishra, General Secretary, AIGBOO
5. Shri G.G. Gandhi, General Secretary, AIGBEA
6. Shri D.N. Trivedi, General Secretary, AIGBOA
7. Shri K. Rajeev, General Secretary, AIGBEC
8. Shri Soni Prakash, General Secretary, AIGBOC
9. Shri B.N. Dubey, General Secretary, NCCRBE

Dated this day of 3rd January, 2014

To
The Secretary,
Dept of Financial Services,
Govt. of India,
Ministry of Finance,
Jeevan Deep Buildings,
Parliament Street,
New Delhi – 110001

Sir,

In accordance with the provisions contained in sub-section (1) of Section 22 of the I.D. Act – 1947, we hereby give you notice that the members of all the constituent unions of **United Forum of RRB Unions** (AIRRBOF, AIRRBEA, AIGBWO, AIGBOO, AIGBEA, AIGBOA, AIGBEC, AIGBOC & NERRBE) propose to go on strike on the **20th & 21st January, 2014. The strike shall commence at 6:00 A.M. on 20th January & shall conclude at 6:00 A.M. on 22nd January, 2014.**

Main Issues and Demands:

- IMMEDIATE WAGE REVISION**
- TO STOP BANKING REFORMS**

The details of the programme and the Statement of the case are furnished herein.

Sd./-

**GENERAL SECRETARY
AIRRBOF, AIRRBEA, AIGBWO, AIGBOO,
AIGBEA, AIGBOA, AIGBEC, AIGBOC & NERRBE**

- Encl.:**
1. Statement of the Case
 2. Details of Agitational Programme

Copy to:

1. Chief Labour Commissioner (Central), New Delhi
2. Chairman, NABARD
3. Chairmen, RRBs

**All India RRB Strike on 20th & 21st January 2014
PROGRAMMES:**

06-01-2014	Mass Demonstrations before HO of all RRBs
On or before 10-01-2014	Submission of Memorandum by all employees demanding immediate wage revision to Dr. Manmohan Singh, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri P. Chidambaram, Hon'ble Minister of Finance, Government of India and the Chairman, Indian Banks' Association
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20-01-2014 – 6:00 A.M. TO 22-01- 2014 – 6:00 A.M.	48 hours banks strike in all banks all over the country

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

1. IMMEDIATE WAGE REVISION:

Wages and service conditions in the banking sector are governed by the industry-level bipartite settlements signed between the Indian Banks Association and the trade unions of bank employees and officers. Public Sector Banks, Private Sector Banks and Foreign Banks who give their mandate to the Indian Banks Association are party to the Settlements and hence are covered by the same.

The last Bipartite Settlement on revision of wages and service conditions, otherwise known as 9th Bipartite Settlement, was signed on 27-4-2010 covering the period from 1-11-2007 to 31-10-2012. Hence the 9th Bipartite Settlement came to an end on 31-10-2012. Consequently, revision of wages and other service conditions have become due as from 1-11-2012.

In view of this, as per the decision of the United Forum of Banks Unions, common set of demands for the employees and officers was submitted to the Indian Banks Association on 30-10-2012.

UFBU has been requested the IBA to adopt a time-bound programme to hold the negotiations on the demands and to expedite the Settlement as early as possible to avoid the accusations that the Unions are always delaying the Settlement.

Even though the formal negotiations started in February, 2013, only 5 rounds of discussions have taken so far viz. on 22-2-2013, 22-4-2013, 7-6-2013, 12-8-2013 and 12-10-2013 i.e. one round of discussion once in two months.

It will be appreciated that the alarming and unabated price rise have seriously eroded the income of the employees and hence the wage revision has become all the more important. The Consumer Price Index has gone up by almost 2400 points under (1960=100) Index series since November, 2007. Hence wage revision to catch up with the high inflation and price rise has become an urgent necessity.

Similarly, the workload in the bank branches has gone up substantially due to increase in total volume of business and also due to non-provision of adequate staff and officers in the branches. Employees and officers are working under a lot of stress and strain. The job profile of the staff has also undergone a change and all these require to be properly remunerated with adequate increase in wages. For this reason also the wage increase has become important.

All India RRB Officers' Federation.

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HENCE, THIS DEMAND FOR IMMEDIATE WAGE REVISION FOR BANK EMPLOYEES AND OFFICERS.

2. STOP BANKING SECTOR REFORMS:

Banks in India today have nearly Rs. 75 Lacs crores as Deposits representing the hard-earned savings of the people of our country. Hence banking institutions have to be properly regulated. It is because of these defined regulations and predominantly being under public sector, that our Banking system was saved from the global crisis. Because of de-regulation and liberal banking policies, many Banks in many countries including in USA and Europe have collapsed. Indian banks were saved because of our strong regulations and being in public sector.

But in the name of Banking Sector Reforms, the Government is taking various steps and measures to liberalise and de-regulate the banking sector.

Recently, the RBI has announced in its discussion paper that the Government's Equity capital in the Banks can be reduced to less than 51% which means nothing but privatisation of our Public Sector Banks.

The Discussion Paper also proposes that the Banks may resort to merger of Banks to become international Banks. Our Banks are meant for our own economic development and hence this is clearly unwarranted. Further merger has its own adverse implications to the detriment of the employees and officers working in the Banks.

RBI has also issued recent guidelines by which it is proposed to give the Foreign Banks, near national status and even a scope to take over our domestic Banks. Already, the foreign capital and investments in our Banks have been increasing and now the move is to allow the foreign banks to take over our Banks.

The Government has also introduced a Bill in the Parliament seeking to allow 49% private capital in our Regional Rural Banks which are today 100% under public sector.

In the Co-operative Banks, recently, the RBI/Bakshi Committee have decided that 2,20,000 employees presently working in the Primary Agricultural Co-op. Societies would be dismantled and made as private Business Correspondents on contract basis thus serious eroding the jobs and job security.

In the name of Reforms, the Banks are also outsourcing the regular jobs in the Banks on contract basis thus increasing the risks involved. The problems faced in the ATMs on account of outsourcing are there for everyone to see.

While the Government is serious on these retrograde reform measures, the real bane in the banking industry is being ignored. Bad loans in the Banks are alarmingly on the increase. It has crossed Rs. 2 lacs crores and the number of deliberate and willful defaulters is also on the increase. Substantial amount of profits earned are being diverted to provide for these bad loans thus sharply reducing the profits of the Banks and at the cost of loss to the Government and the Banks.

A developing country like India needs a very strong, vibrant and well-regulated banking system and attempts to de-regulate them in the name of reforms is wrong with serious consequences.

HENCE, OUR DEMAND TO STOP THE ABOVE MENTIONED BANKING REFORMS.

Comrades, let us make the two day strike a grand success.

Circular # 03:2014

4th January 2014

**48 HOURS STRIKE ON 20TH AND 21ST JANUARY 2014 STRIKE
NOTICE SERVED IBA CALLS UFBU FOR NEGOTIATIONS ON 29TH JAN.14
CONCILIATION MEETING FIXED BY CLC ON 13TH JANUARY 2014**

We reproduce hereunder the text of All India Bank Officers' Conference Circular No. 01, dated 2nd January, 2014.

QUOTE

Please refer to our Circular No. 2013/66 dated 24/12/2013, whereby, we informed you about the decision of UFBU to continue its struggle and decision taken on 23rd December 2013 to observe 48 hours All India Bank Strike on 20th and 21st January 2014. Vide Circular No. 2013/67 dated 26/12/2013, we also advised about the preparatory programmes chalked out by the United Forum of Bank Unions consisting of demonstrations, central rallies, poster campaigning and badge wearing etc. We also advised you to get the memoranda signed by all the officers/ employees for onward submission to Hon'ble Prime Minister, Hon'ble Finance Minister and Chairman, Indian Banks' Association. We are sure that all our affiliates/ state units are working for the successful implementation of all the programmes already advised.

Meanwhile, Indian Banks' Association (IBA) has called representatives of United Forum of Bank Unions for negotiations on 29th January 2014 at IBA office, Mumbai. We were of the view that calling us for negotiation on a date later than the strike call is

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simply a mockery of a sensitive issue like overdue wage negotiation. We expressed this view to the Convener, UFBU and suggested him that we should escalate our action programme not only by preponing our strike but also to hold the same for more number of days. We also took other officers' organizations into confidence on the issue. However, UFBU decided to keep the same schedule of strike despite our strong feelings that observing strike on 20th and 21st January 2014 without exhibiting any strong reaction and participating in the Bipartite Talks afterwards will be preposterous. Your General Secretary after consulting other constituents of the UFBU tried to ensure that Indian Banks' Association calls us for negotiations before strike action. In the process, the undersigned approached all the authorities concerned.

In this sequel, the Chief Labour Commissioner, Ministry of Labour, Government of India has called the representatives of UFBU and IBA for conciliation meetings on 13th January 2014 at New Delhi.

Comrades, our fight is for reasonable and respectable wage revision and against the retrogradatory actions of the Government in the name of banking reforms. The issue is of our dignity and existence. Though we are not eager for strike at the cost of our salary deductions and inconvenience to our valued clients but, we will not hesitate to take any possible action to ensure fulfilment of our demands and protect our rights. Let us continue with implementation of the programmes already advised to you vide our last circulars, without any change. In case any positive development takes place, we shall keep you informed or else of which all our action programmes including 48 hours strike stands.

UNQUOTE

Circular # 04:2014

13th January 2014

RESTORATION OF JOINT CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL (JCC) FOR RRBs

We reproduce hereunder the text of the letter written by the Federation on the captioned subject to the Chairman, National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development (NABARD) for your information & necessary action.

QUOTE

We welcome you as the new Chairman of NABARD and pledge full support & help from officers working in Regional Rural Banks in your endeavour to turn a new leaf in the development of rural India.

We shall request you to please restore the JCC forum constituted by Govt. of India to resolve HR issues of RRBs.

We look forward to your early initiative.

UNQUOTE

Circular # 05:2014

14th January 2014

**CONCILIATION MEETING
BETWEEN IBA & UFBU CALLED BY CLC TODAY**

We reproduce hereunder the text of All India Bank Officers' Conference Circular No. 05, dated 13th January, 2014.

QUOTE

Our members were informed that subsequent to our strike notice for 48 hours starting from 6.00 A.M. on 20.01.2014 to 6.00 A.M. on 22.01.2014, IBA called UFBU for negotiations on 29th January, 2014 at Mumbai. This was taken as insult by UFBU, since meeting fixed by IBA was to ridicule the strike notice given by UFBU.

The pressure was built up by the leadership of UFBU and specifically by the undersigned after liaisoning with various authorities. We are happy that our efforts brought results as are witnessed during the discussion held in the meeting before Chief Labour Commissioner today.

We reproduce, hereunder, text of Circular No 2014/15 of date issued by the Convenor of UFBU giving details of the discussion for your information and necessary action.

“Subsequent to issuance of Notice by UFBU for 48 Hours' All India Bank Strike on the 20th and 21st January 2014, the conciliation meeting was held today at New Delhi. The proceedings were conducted by Shri B.K. Sanwariya, CLC(C). The meeting was also attended by the officials from Department of Financial Services. IBA was represented by Shri M.V. Tanksale, Chief Executive Officer, Shri K. Unnikrishnan, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and other officials.

The leaders of UFBU argued that the meetings are being held with much delay and there is no seriousness on the part of IBA to conclude the bilateral discussions at the earliest. UFBU also stated that the offer of 5% given by IBA is too low.

The representatives of IBA stated that so far five rounds of meetings were held and considering the constraints of banking industry on account of increasing NPAs and also the rising pension cost, the affordable offer was given by IBA.

Circular # 09:2014

24th January 2014

10TH TRIENNIAL AT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

We reproduce hereunder the text of All India Bank Officers' Conference Circular No. 10, dated 22nd January, 2014.

“The 10th Triennial Conference of the Confederation is scheduled to kick start with a massive rally and public meeting at 5 PM on the 8th of March 2014 at Thiruvananthapuram aka Trivandrum. The Organising Committee under the leadership of Com. Abraham Shaji John, Secretary AIBOC Kerala State is leaving no stone unturned for the successful conduct of the Conference.

Preparations are in full swing. The Kerala State committee has blocked different hotels and has negotiated competitive rates on bed and breakfast arrangement basis. Communication was sent by the central office to contact state committee office bearers for their requirement. Many of our affiliates have already completed the bookings. A few affiliates are yet to do so. As rooms may not be available at the last moment, we request those affiliates, who are yet to do the room bookings, to immediately contact Com. Abraham Shaji John (Mob: 09847425515), Com. C. Rajkumar, General Secretary ABOA Unit SBT (Mob: 09895270323) or Com. N. Jayakrishnan, President, ABOA Unit SBT (Mob: 09447761692) at the earliest. Transportation from the hotel to the venue can also be arranged if required by the affiliates on payment basis.

The State Unit is also planning to celebrate International Women's Day on 8th March by organising a seminar at 3 PM. Please ensure the lady delegates attend the seminar and be part of Women's Day celebrations.

The inaugural session of the Triennial Conference is scheduled to start at 6.30 PM after the rally at Nishagandhi Open air auditorium, near Museum and dinner is arranged at the Suryakanthi Auditorium right next door on the 8th March 2014.

The delegate session will start at 9.30 AM on the 9th of March 2014 at AKG Hall, Gas House Junction with the hoisting of the flag. Lunch for the two days is arranged at Hassan Marikkar Hall, next to the venue. However, dinner arrangements will have to be made by the affiliates for their delegates.

Thiruvananthapuram eagerly awaits your arrival. Let the Conference go down in the annals of the Confederation as the most successful one with large scale participation”.

All India RRB Officers' Federation.

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Circular # 10:2014

28th January 2014

TWO DAY STRIKE ON 10TH & 11TH FEBRUARY, 2014 IN RRBs

In accordance with decision of United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU) on 27th January, 2014, decision has been taken to observe strike for two days on 10th & 11th February, 2014 in Regional Rural Banks. Accordingly, strike notice has been issued on 27th January, 2014. The Notice is enclosed. No separate Notice need to be submitted to the Chairman of the RRB. A copy of this Notice may be handed over for information & record.

Strike should be observed in all RRBs with due sincerity to make it a grand success.

Ref no. 2022:06:2014

27th January 2014

To
The Secretary,
Dept of Financial Services,
Govt. of India,
Ministry of Finance,
Jeevan Deep Buildings,
Parliament Street,
New Delhi – 110001

Sir,

Further to our strike notice dated 3rd January, 2014 calling for two day's strike on 20th & 21st January, 2014 followed by the conciliation meeting held by the CLC on 13th January, 2014 and meeting with IBA on 17th January, 2014, in which the improved offer of 9.5% made by you subject to further improvement the strike was deferred by UFRB to create a positive atmosphere for further negotiations. However in today's meeting the meager improvement of 0.5% over the previous offer of 9.5% has disappointed us which was rejected instantaneously.

Hence, in accordance with the provisions contained in sub-section (1) of Section 22 of the I.D. Act – 1947, we hereby give you notice that the members of all the constituent unions of **United Forum of RRB Unions** (AIRRBOF, AIRRBEA, AIGBWO, AIGBOO, AIGBEA, AIGBOA, AIGBEC, AIGBOC & NERRBE) propose to go on strike on the **10th & 11th February, 2014. The strike will be observed for 48 hours from 6:00 A.M. on 10th February to 6:00 A.M. on 12th February, 2014.**

Main Issues and Demands:

- IMMEDIATE WAGE REVISION**
- TO STOP BANKING REFORMS**

The details of the programme and the Statement of the case are furnished herein.

**Sd./-, GENERAL SECRETARY
AIRRBOF, AIRRBEA, AIGBWO, AIGBOO,
AIGBEA, AIGBOA, AIGBEC, AIGBOC & NERRBE**

Copy to:

1. Chief Labour Commissioner (Central), New Delhi
2. Chairman, NABARD
3. Chairmen, RRBs

FORM - I
NOTICE OF STRIKE

**NAME OF UNIONS : UNITED FORUM OF REGIONAL RURAL BANK UNIONS
(UFRRBU)**

- ALL INDIA REGIONAL RURAL BANK OFFICERS FEDERATION(AIRRBOF)
- ALL INDIA REGIONAL RURAL BANK EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION (AIRRBEA)
- ALL INDIA GRAMIN BANK WORKERS ORGANISATION (AIGBWO)
- ALL INDIA GRAMIN BANK OFFICERS ORGANISATION (AIGBOO)
- ALL INDIA GRAMIN BANK EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION (AIGBEA)
- ALL INDIA GRAMIN BANK OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION (AIGBOA)
- ALL INDIA GRAMIN BANK EMPLOYEES CONGRESS (AIGBEC)
- ALL INDIA GRAMIN BANK OFFICERS CONGRESS (AIGBOC)
- NATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF REGIONAL RURAL BANK EMPLOYEES
(NCCRBE)

NAMES OF ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

1. Shri S.K. Bhattacharjee, General Secretary, AIRRBOF
2. Shri M. Syed Khan, General Secretary, AIRRBEA
3. Shri Sudhir Pandey, General Secretary, AIGBWO
4. Shri A.K. Mishra, General Secretary, AIGBOO
5. Shri G.G. Gandhi, General Secretary, AIGBEA
6. Shri D.N. Trivedi, General Secretary, AIGBOA
7. Shri K. Rajeev, General Secretary, AIGBEC
8. Shri Soni Prakash, General Secretary, AIGBOC
9. Shri B.N. Dubey, General Secretary, NCCRBE

Inaugurating the New Delhi branch and registered office of the bank here on Thursday, Chidambaram said, to grow quickly, BMB should think 'out-of-the-box' and invent its own business model other than branch expansion.

"We ought not to believe that growth for this bank will come only from branch expansion.

"The board has to develop its own innovative model for growth," Chidambaram suggested, adding that it should look to outsource its activities to other organisations, especially those run by women.

BMB's board of directors, he said, should also consider whether customers who are based 10-20 km from the branch can be reached through the use of technology.

Announced in this year's Budget, the BMB started its journey in November with the launch of seven branches in various parts of the country. The seven branches opened on November 19, are located in Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Lucknow, Ahmedabad and Guwahati.

Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit suggested that BMB could look at setting up mobile ATMs in thickly populated areas of the Capital so that access to banking could be improved for many women.

With today's inauguration, at New Delhi and Indore, BMB now has nine branches.

Chidambaram declined to comment on queries on Nokia India and its tax troubles.

The employees of Nokia India in Chennai had sought the Finance Minister's intervention for sorting out the tax dispute between the company and the Income Tax Department.

Nokia India's tax troubles are coming in the way of smooth integration of the telecom major's Indian unit with Microsoft following its global deal.

Source – The Hindu Business Line December 6th, 2013.

ALL-INDIA BANK STRIKE ON DEC 18

The United Forum of Bank Unions, an umbrella organisation of bank officers' and employees' unions, will go on an all-India strike on December 18 to press for a halt to the ongoing banking reforms and immediate wage revision in the banking sector.

RBI SPRINGS A SURPRISE WITH STATUS QUO ON REPO RATE, CRR

Reserve Bank Governor Raghuram Rajan on Wednesday sprang a surprise leaving key rates unchanged to back growth but warned that they may be hiked if inflation does not subside.

Expecting softening of vegetable prices and lower overall inflation going forward, the RBI maintained status quo on the repo rate at 7.75 per cent and cash reserve ratio (CRR) at 4 per cent. The move was cheered by the stock market. The Sensex soared to close 247.72 points higher at 20,859.86 on Wednesday.

The repo rate is the rate at which banks borrow from the RBI while CRR is the slice of deposits that banks have to compulsorily park with the RBI.

“If the expected softening of food inflation does not materialise and translate into a significant reduction in headline inflation...or if inflation, excluding food and fuel does not fall, the Reserve Bank will act, including on off-policy dates,” Rajan said at a press conference after unveiling the Mid-Quarter Monetary Policy Review. The next review is due on January 28.

Wednesday’s policy move is unlikely to see banks change their lending and deposit rates. This will leave customers with little to cheer about. However, the decision will be come as a breather for industry and retail borrowers in particular as the markets had expected another 0.25 percentage point hike in the short-term lending rate that could have raised EMIs for home, auto and other loans.

After he took office in September, Rajan had hiked policy rates twice by 25 basis points each. Lauding the RBI’s decision to hold rates, India Inc on Wednesday said monetary policy alone was not the answer to tackling inflation and that the Government must initiate supply-side reforms and put in place better storage facilities to contain food prices.

“The RBI has demonstrated restraint and foresight to strike the right balance between inflation and growth,” CII Director-General Chandrajit Banerjee said.

According to Bank of Baroda Chairman and Managing Director, S.S. Mundra, “It will be status quo (on deposit and lending rates) and we will wait-and-watch. Credit demand is subdued and liquidity is comfortable as of now.”

However, the BoB chief pointed out that if one of the two variables — liquidity or credit demand — changes, only then would the need arise to review the interest rates.

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The voting pattern in South Central Railway, North Western Railway, South Western Railway, Central Railway, Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala; and Integral Coach Factory, Chennai, indicates strong support for the strike call with over 90 per cent voters stamping a 'yes', say early estimates.

The final numbers could, however, be muted, after taking into account absentee votes, sources said.

The Southern Railway declared that 87 per cent of voters supported an indefinite strike call.

The news of an indefinite strike call may prove to be another headache for the UPA Government, which faced a drubbing in the recent Assembly polls to five States, and is preparing to face general elections next year.

Over a million railway workers were supposed to vote last Friday and Saturday across the country to decide on a strike, according to the All India Railway men Federation (AIRF), the largest railway union. The Indian Railways is the largest employer with over 13 lakh on its rolls and moves more than 2.2 crore people and two million tonnes of cargo every day. Staff cost is the single largest expenditure head for the Railways.

For long, the AIRF has been demanding that over one lakh vacancies be filled. It has also been demanding that the Railway Ministry provide defined pension benefits to officials who joined after January 1, 2004 — just like the Home Ministry ensured a defined benefit scheme for Defence personnel and paramilitary forces, including those who joined after 2004.

The union has listed 36 demands that include more bonus, cadre restructuring, higher transport allowance, better working conditions for train-running staff and setting up the Seventh Pay Commission.

After the voting pattern emerges, the AIRF will write to the Railway Board asking it to meet the union's demands. Since rail strikes cause a huge disruption to the economy, a decision to go on strike is tough, which is why the union opted for a ballot.

The 1974 strike was said to have been crushed by the Indira Gandhi Government, leading to widespread victimisation and thousands losing their jobs. Since then, there have been two strike ballots, but no strikes.

Source – The Hindu Business Line December 24, 2013.

BANKS CATCH 'EM YOUNG WITH ZERO BALANCE ACCOUNTS

For decades, they were ignored by banks because they had little or no money to spare.

But now, bankers are looking at students for business, particularly over the long term. At least a dozen banks now have special schemes for students/youth.

“At the moment they may be young, but soon, they will be employees and can be potential customers,” says Pawan Kumar Garg, who heads the national banking division of Indian Overseas Bank (IOB).

IOB is keen on catching them young. Last week, in an internal circular, the bank said: “There is an urgent need to bring down the average age of our retail customers and our focus in future is to target this segment (of young customers in the age group of 10 to 28 years).”

Garg said officials have been going to colleges and offering students zero (minimum) balance accounts and free debit cards.

“This may not drive big business now. But we are investing in the future and also helping youngsters in the process.”

Students, too, seem to be happy. “I have been given a zero-balance account with a debit card by IOB officials who came to my college. I had been using an ATM card of my father’s account but now I can use my own card,” says R. Mishra, an 18-year-old studying accounting at Tapasya College. Focusing on young customers not only holds the promise of future business but also has other advantages, says Andhra Bank Chairman C.V.R. Rajendran. “Generally, no young customers will come to the bank for transactions as they prefer to use alternate channels. This reduces the cost of transactions for us.” It costs banks Rs 40 if the transaction is done through human interface, Rs 20 though an ATM and even less if it is through the Internet or mobile phone, he adds.

Students with savings bank accounts are also likely to seek loans from Banks.

Rajendran says that customers in their 20s are increasingly taking retail loans, including home loans.

The Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology has recommended that banks reach out to young customers through social media.

Some 20 million students study in colleges and if this trend continues over the next five years, banks will have 100 million potential customers, it noted in a study.

M. Bhagavantha Rao, Managing Director, State Bank of Hyderabad, says that recent initiatives by banks, such as launching e-lounges to facilitate automation of transactions, are also aimed at attracting youngsters.

Source – The Hindu Business Line January 5, 2014.

TEA BOARD TO PROMOTE MINI, MICRO TEA PROCESSING FACILITIES

The Tea Board will focus on promoting development of mini and micro tea processing facilities, capable of producing 200-500 kg a day, by small tea growers, as part of its quality upgradation drive.

Farmers can avail up to 40 per cent capital subsidy to set up such factories through self-help groups, according to the scheme.

Small growers currently sell their produce either to large plantations or bought-leaf-factories. The factories are viewed with concern due to quality issues.

According to a senior Tea Board official, the project had earlier been rolled out as part of the “Quality upgradation and Product Development” campaign. To provide focus to implementation of the project, it will now be spearheaded by the newly-formed Small Tea Growers’ Development Directorate.

“We are awaiting the Planning Commission’s approval for announcement of the Small Growers Development Scheme to be operated by the directorate. Our focus this year will be to promote factory development by small tea growers,”

Figures available with the Tea Board show that production by small tea growers between April and November 2013 increased by nine per cent to 339 million kg, against 312 mkg during the corresponding period.

Buoyed by the growth in production, a slew of quality improvement initiatives have been taken up and these will be implemented by newly-recruited officers of the Directorate.

“While the development officers will regularly hold workshops and tea conventions to give lessons to teach small tea growers on quality improvement, some of them will be taken to Kenya and Sri Lanka to experience the global practices,” the Tea Board official said.

Source – The Hindu Business Line January 11, 2014.

IBA OFFER OF 5% RISE IN PAYSLIP BILL INADEQUATE: UNIONS

While bank managements, under the aegis of the Indian Banks' Association, are ready to bear the burden of a five per cent increase in the pay slip component of the total wage bill, trade unions in the banking sector say the increase is not adequate if one takes into account the rising inflation.

Mohan V. Tanksale, Chief Executive, IBA, said the offer of five per cent increase in the pay slip bill was not acceptable to the unions.

The IBA's wage negotiation committee and trade unions will meet on January 29 to reconcile the differences.

The last five-year industry-wide wage settlement expired in November 2012. Salaries in public sector banks and old generation private sector banks are governed by the settlement.

According to C.H. Venkatachalam, General Secretary, All India Bank Employees Association, the five per cent hike in the pay slip components of the total wage bill works out to Rs 1,575 crore for the banking sector and is woefully inadequate. He pointed out that in the last settlement the pay slip bill was much higher at Rs 4,800 crore.

"When prices are increasing day by day, when the workload on the employees has gone due to steep increase in the volume of business, there is urgent need to increase the wages of the bank employees but bank managements' attitude seems to very casual," he said.

Source – The Hindu Business Line January 7, 2014.

NO CHANGE IN STRIKE PLAN BY BANK STAFF

Operations at all the Public Sector Banks and Regional Rural Banks are likely to be affected for two days from 20th January as the United Forum of Banks Unions has given a strike call, demanding wage revision as well as the resolution of certain other issues. The National Convener of UFBU M.V. Murali told PTI today that the Centre and the Indian Banks' Association have failed to settle the 14 month long pending demand for 32 percent wage revision for about a million strong staff in the Banking Sector. The wage revision has been due since November, 2012. UFBU is an umbrella organisation of nine Bank Employees and Officers' Unions.

Source – The Hindu Business Line January 6, 2014.

All India RRB Officers' Federation.

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