

# **UNITED FORUM OF BANK UNIONS**

**(AIBEA-AIBOC-NCBE-AIBOA-BEFI-INBEF-INBOC-NOBW-NOBO)**

**CIRCULAR No. UFBU/2025/5**

**Date : 23-3-2025**

**TO MEMBERS OF ALL CONSTITUENT UNIONS:**

Dear Comrades,

**Our call for strike on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2025 postponed.**

In the midst of our agitational programme, as informed in our earlier message on 18-3-2025, there was conciliation meeting on that day between IBA/bank managements and UFBU as arranged by the Chief Labour Commissioner. Since no understanding could be reached on our demands, the conciliation meeting was adjourned to 21<sup>st</sup>, and accordingly day before yesterday (on 21-3-2025) one more round of conciliation meeting took place in CLC office, New Delhi.

Chief Labopur Commissioner (Central), Shri K. Shekar himself conducted the conciliation proceedings along with Dy. CLC, RLC (HQ) and ALC (IR). Representatives of DFS from the Ministry of Finance, IBA and all Bank managements were present. All our constituent Unions were present.

There were detailed discussions on all our demands raised in our Strike Notice.

**1. 5 Days Banking per week:** There was elaborate discussion on introduction of 5 Day Banking per week. We pointed out that even though our Bipartite Settlement/Joint Note was signed one year ago in March, 2024, the issue still remains pending with the Government to whom the IBA has recommended. We explained that keeping the issue pending for such a long time amounts to ignoring the sanctity of the bilateral settlement arrived between the IBA and UFBU. We also pointed out that in the present scenario where employees and officers/Managers in the Banks work under a lot of stress and strain, many times, working beyond normal working hours, the demand for 2 days of weekly off has become a necessity.

IBA replied that as per the Settlement/Joint Note, they have recommended the matter to the Government and they are awaiting their approval. When pointed out by CLC that IBA should follow up the matter with Government, they assured that they would pursue the matter with Government for getting their due approval. DFS representative stated that the issue is under consideration but cannot commit any timeline. Hence there was virtual stalemate on this issue.

Hence, the Chief Labour Commissioner wanted some senior officials from the DFS to participate in the conciliation meeting to know the stand of the Government to end the stalemate. Even though all the top officials of the DFS were busy with the proceedings of the ongoing Parliament Session, a senior Joint Secretary of the DFS participated in the meeting via video conference and clarified that the matter is receiving the serious attention of the Government including by the Finance Minister.

We conveyed our disappointment over the undue delay in the matter and wanted the Government to expedite the process. He assured that the matter is already receiving the serious attention of the Government including at the level of Finance Minister and hence requested the UFBU to reconsider our call for strike so that customers are not put to any inconvenience. We informed him that UFBU leaders will meet and take a decision looking to his assurances.

- 2. Adequate Recruitment in all Cadres :** We pointed out that year after year the number of clerical and substaff is getting reduced even though business has swelled hugely. We explained how the shortage of staff is resulting in undue workload on the existing staff, staff not able to complete their work within office hours, compelling officer staff to undertake clerical, cashier and even watchman duties, customers getting irritated over delay in services and picking up quarrel with staff including physical assaults, etc. We also drew their attention that even out of the clerical staff recruited, the attrition is high and net intake is much lesser. We pointed out that in many branches, there is not a single substaff or watchman or Armed Guard or even part time sweepers. We explained that in the absence of recruitment of permanent substaff in these vacancies, large number of temporary employees have been employed by branches continuously for a long period of years and hence are expecting their regularisation. Hence we emphasised our demand for adequate recruitment of staff in all cadres.

After discussions, the IBA agreed to take up with the member banks and with the recent changes in the enhanced duties of clerical employees in public sector banks as per the 12<sup>th</sup> Bipartite Settlement, IBA was hopeful of positive development in recruitment in all the Public Sector Banks.

IBA also assured discussions with the UFBU on a periodic basis on this issue by involving all the Banks including discussing manpower planning mechanism in the Banks. The issue of recruitment of Substaff shall also be discussed and it was decided to take up the issue with a positive frame of mind.

Regarding high incidence of attrition in Banks, IBA informed that efforts are afoot to re-arrange the sequence of recruitment in Banks like POs followed by clerical staff and like SBI, PSB, RRB, etc. which is expected to reduce the rate of attrition to some good extent.

- 3. Outsourcing Permanent Jobs in Banks:** The IBA informed that as agreed before the CLC, they are ready to discuss the issue with the UFBU in the background of the guidelines of the RBI and having regard to the judgement of the Supreme Court. IBA also informed that they have sought for the suggestions and views of the Unions in this regard in the earlier round of discussions. The CLC advised the parties to discuss this issue bilaterally.
- 4. Review of directive on PLI issued by DFS :** We pointed out that the recent Guidelines from the DFS on revised PLI for Scale IV officers and above is a violation of the mutually agreed/signed Joint Note and is also highly discriminatory and unfair. After discussion IBA agreed to refer the matter to DFS for re-examination and reconsideration of this new scheme sent to the Public Sector Banks.
- 5. Government guidelines on review of efficiency of employees and officers at the age of 55/57/58:** We conveyed our strong protest against the recent instructions from the DFS to Banks that managements should review the efficiency of the officers and employees of the Banks on reaching the age of 55/57/58 years and submit the Report to them every month. DFS representative clarified that it was a routine communication sent to the Banks based on the guidelines from DOPT and there was no malafide in that. We conveyed to DFS that Government should not ask for such information from the Banks as the same are intimidatory.
- 6. Safety of Employees and Officers in Branches against assault by unruly elements and customers:** We pointed out that instances are on the increase where unruly customers and outside elements are attacking and assaulting the bank employees, officers and Managers and the safety of the staff has become a question mark. IBA fully shared our concerns and informed that they are fully seized of the issue and it is being discussed at the IBA level with Bank

managements to prevent such occurrences and to ensure safety of the bank staff. We suggested that permanent Armed Guards should be appointed in the Branches which will be a deterrent against attacks on staff.

**7. Filling up of Post of Workmen / Officers Directors in PSBs:** We pointed out that the posts of Workman Director and Officer Directors based on the panel of names submitted by the majority Unions remain unfilled for the past nearly 10 years. The representatives of DFS informed that 14 names from various Banks have already been processed and sent for consideration and approval by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet and the remaining cases are under correspondence and examination.

**8. Resolution of Residual Issues pending with IBA:** IBA informed that two round of discussions have already taken place on 26.8.2024 and 13.3.2025 and that further discussions will continue to find amicable solutions.

To our demand for reverting to **Old Pension Scheme for NPS** covered employees, IBA informed that this issue is part of the residual issues and that they are open for discussions on the same in the further round of discussions.

**9. Increase in Gratuity ceiling:** The DFS representative informed that it requires legal formalities which involves Ministry of Labour. DFS has already taken it up with the Ministry of Labour and is following up the same. The UFBU requested to expedite the process.

**10. Income Tax on Perquisites:** The DFS informed that levy of Income Tax on Perquisites is as per the Income Tax Act. Banks may take their own decision in absorbing the Tax burden.

**11. Maintaining 51% of Capital in IDBI Bank:** The representative of DFS and IBA informed that this is a policy matter announced by the Government and hence cannot comment on the same.

**12. Unfair Labour Practice in Banking Industry :** The UFBU brought to the attention of the CLC that even though all employees and officers have a right to join the Union/Association of their choice as provided in the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926 and also as per the Article 19-1-C of the Constitution of our country, some of the Banks are preventing SMGS-IV and above officials to be members of the Association/Union in which other officers are members. The IBA informed that they will discuss the issue further. The Unions requested the intervention of the CLC(C) in this regard. Responding to the issue of Unfair Labour Practice, The CLC(c) advised to file a complaint for violation of Section 25(T) of ID Act, 1947 so that the matter be investigated with legal application of mind and appropriate action may be initiated, if required.

Looking to the entire detailed discussion as above, the Chief Labour Commissioner requested the UFBU to consider withdrawal of the proposed Strike on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2025. We informed him that the undue delay so far by the Government in according its approval to 5 Days Banking has made us sceptical and going merely by assurances would be difficult for UFBU and hence cannot withdraw the strike call. CLC informed us that UFBU should keep in mind the assurances given by the senior official of the DFS through video conference and that the matter is receiving the attention of the Finance Minister also.

He further said that he will also follow up the issue with the DFS since 5 day banking is part of the Settlement/Joint Note which implies that both IBA and the UFBU have come to the agreement on that issue. The CLC also assured that he will directly monitor the development at periodical interval so that matter may be resolved at an early date.

In the view of the above developments, the leaders of constituent unions of UFBU met among themselves for mutual consultations and having regard to the entire proceedings of the conciliation, the response of the IBA on the various issues raised by us in the strike notice and the response of the DFS representatives including by the Joint Secretary of the Dept. of Financial Services, the initiatives taken by the CLC to follow up and monitor the issue of 5 Day Banking with the DFS, felt that the proposed strike action and agitational programmes can be deferred and postponed by about two months. It was decided that if there is no satisfactory development, UFBU will again revive the agitation and strike call.

Accordingly, this decision was conveyed to the CLC and IBA by UFBU to postpone our strike call.

In view of this, the CLC adjourned the proceedings to 22-4-2025 for further discussions.

Comrades, it can be observed that all the issues listed in the strike notice have been taken up during the discussions and attempts are being made to take it forward for amicable solutions. On the important issue of 5 Days Banking, the assurances of the IBA, DFS and CLC have opened the way for an amicable solution at the earliest. We hope that things will move in the positive direction.

We thank all our Unions and members all over the country for their enthusiastic response and participation in the agitational programmes which manifested our unity and determination to pursue our demands. This has paved the way for fruitful discussions and positive approach to resolve the issues.

We are aware that due to high expectations, there is some resentment about not achieving 5 day banking immediately. Our agitational programmes and strike call have sufficiently highlighted the importance of our demand and we are hopeful that the Government would attend to the same seriously. We assure all our members that this issue is being specially attended to and will be followed up to the logical conclusion at the earliest.

With greetings,

Yours comradely,



**AIBEA**



**AIBOC**



**NCBE**



**AIBOA**



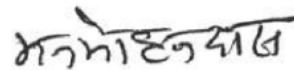
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