

STATE BANK OF INDIA OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

(BENGAL CIRCLE)

(Registered under Trade Unions Act 1926-Regd. No. 6908)

1, STRAND ROAD, KOLKATA-700 001.

Phone: 2213-0663, 2213-0154, 2213-0665 (after 5.30 P.M.), Fax : (033) 2210-1684



e-mail: sbioabengalcircle@gmail.com
www.sbioabengal.com

Circular No. 28/2023

Date : 07.02.2023

To All Members (Please Circulate)

We reproduce hereunder the Circular No. 14 dated 06.02.2023 issued by the General Secretary, All India State Bank Officers' Federation, the contents of which are self-explicit.

With revolutionary greetings,

Shubhajyoti Chattopadhyay
(General Secretary)

Dear Comrades,

STRIKE NOTICE SERVED BY SBIOA CHANDIGARH CIRCLE

Our affiliate Circle association, SBIOA Chandigarh Circle has served a strike notice to the circle management on various issues (appended herewith).

We extend our solidarity to the circle association and wish them success in their struggle.

Yours Comradely,

Sd/-

(Deepak Kumar Sharma)
General Secretary

(Text of the Strike notice served to the Circle management by SBIOA Chandigarh)

Ref: 2023/SBIOA/1

Date: 06.02.2023

The Chief General Manager
State Bank of India
Local Head Office,
Chandigarh Sec 17-A,
Chandigarh - 160017.

Sir,

STRIKE NOTICE

Please take notice under Sub-Section (i) of Section 22 of the Industrial Disputes Act that, the members of State Bank of India Officers' Association, Chandigarh Circle working in Branches, Administrative and other offices of State Bank of India all over the Circle (comprising states of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Union Territory of Chandigarh, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh) will observe One Day Strike on the 27th February, 2023.

OPPOSING

1. Unilateralism by the Circle Management
2. Attack on self-respect & dignity, victimization & harassment of officers and high handedness by Controllers in the Circle.
3. Work-Life Imbalance and Incessant pressure to achieve targets resulting in unethical practices in the Circle.
4. Violation of Transfer/ Posting Norms in the Circle.
5. Multiple meetings during office hours and holidays affecting normal work and infringing privacy of officers in the Circle.

Shubhajyoti Chattopadhyay

General Secretary

Mobile : 9434551152

State Bank of India Officers' Association

(BENGAL CIRCLE)

: 2 :

and

DEMANDING

1. Self-respect & dignity of officers at workplace and Implementation of work-life Balance circular in letter and spirit as per bank's instructions in the Circle.
2. Timely payment of Reimbursement of incidental expenditure for working on holidays/granting Compensatory off to officers for working on Holidays as per corporate Centre guidelines.
3. Posting support Officer for Single Officer Branches in Regions in the Circle.
4. Payment of Water Scarcity Allowance to all eligible officers in the Circle.
5. Complete stoppage of use of 'WhatsApp' for official purposes, as per Bank's Instructions in the Circle.
6. Periodic conduct of bilateral meetings in the Circle.

Please note that in the event of issues remaining unresolved the Association will resort to further organizational actions including strike for a longer period.

Yours faithfully,

-sd-

(Sanjay K Sharma)

GENERAL SECRETARY

Copy to:

1. The Regional Labour Commissioner (C), O/o Dy. Chief Labour Commissioner (C), Kendriya Sadan, Sector 9-A, Chandigarh. (For the offices of State Bank of India in the States of Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab and Union Territory of Chandigarh)
2. The Regional Labour Commissioner (C), Ministry of Labour and Employment, O/o Regional Labour Commissioner (C) 420- A, Gandhi nagar, Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir. (For the offices of SBI in UT of J&K)

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

1. UNILATERALISM BY THE CIRCLE MANAGEMENT

Bipartite negotiation and mutual consultation between the Management and the Association has been recognized, accepted and implemented in the circle by the Bank in order to strengthen the IR fabric of the Bank. Management had recognised the Association as a major stakeholder and as a partner-in-progress and used to share the concerns, constraints and implementation of new policies and initiatives so as to enable the Association to give positive feedback for better implementation of the same.

The Association, being a major stake holder, has a right to know, understand and suggest improvements in all HR matters. These are bipartite in nature. However, of late, attempts are made to take unilateral decisions by the Circle Management in all HR matters. Association is treated like an outsider by the Circle Management and the issues concerning HR, which are of bilateral in nature, are being taken arbitrarily and unilaterally. Hence, we oppose all such unilateral decisions detrimental to the interests of the Officers.

2. ATTACK ON SELF RESPECT & DIGNITY, VICTIMIZATION & HARASSMENT OF OFFICERS AND HIGH HANDEDNESS BY THE CONTROLLERS

We had brought in the notice of the Circle Management some incidents of high handedness of Controllers. Issuance of unsolicited and unlawful instructions, use of abusive language, constant threat of transfers, targeting of officers for raising their grievances through internal channels, has become a regular practice. The Circle Management has victimized many officers by inflicting penalties on them without following due procedures or initiating disciplinary proceedings. Officers at branches are blamed for everything in the name of non-performance and their self-respect and the dignity are trampled upon in review meetings. We fervently impressed upon the circle management, through various letters and meetings, about urgent need of course correction for fostering harmony, congenial relationship, creation of a positive environment to uphold the dignity of the officers and keep them motivated to ensure better performances for an eventual growth of Bank along with its employees but the concerns pointed out by us have been ignored.

Shubhajyoti Chattopadhyay

General Secretary

Mobile : 9434551152

: 3 :

3. WORK LIFE IMBALANCE - INCESSANT PRESSURE TO ACHIEVE TARGETS RESULTING IN UNETHICAL PRACTICES

The officers across the Circle are being instructed via WhatsApp/ telephonically to attend office on holidays for attending to routine works. Instructions violative of Bank's directions are mostly given verbally by the Circle Management and Officers are forced to carry out such instructions. This jeopardizes the interests of the Bank putting the officers in difficult situations. There are multiple meetings for achieving daily targets solely on cross-selling/forced selling of insurance products throughout the circle and the core business of the Bank, including compliance has taken a back seat. The officers are hard pressed to sell products of subsidiaries and later on, these innocent officers, who act under pressure of seniors, face disciplinary and punitive actions resulting in total morale setback for the officers. We as a responsible trade union organization take serious exception to denting of the image and goodwill of the Bank due to such actions of the Circle management.

The encroachment on personal/family time is resulting in a conflict between personal and work commitments. We have been given to understand that a significant number of officers have applied for voluntary retirement in the Circle recently. The reported number is significantly large, if compared with average number of resignations in previous years in the Circle. Almost 50% of the officers are the youth who look not only for a good salary, perquisites but quality of life also. Due to prevailing work environment, the attrition rate in our circle has been increasing day by day and frustration across the cadres is at the zenith, while motivation to work hard is at the nadir. Leaves applied by officers are being denied by controllers' on flimsy reasons. Even for availing sick leaves, salaries have been debited/ stopped without following standard procedures. We strongly oppose repeated calling of officers to work on holidays/festivals; continuous reporting and calling to late night/ late evening meetings/ team meetings, harassing female officers by forcing them to be available on video calls in meetings, and threatening in such meetings.

4. VIOLATION OF TRANSFER POLICY NORMS:

Transfers are bilateral issue and transfer of Junior level and Middle level Officers are governed by Circle Transfer Policy Guidelines. We observe that there have been violations in respect of transfers/postings, including those of Scale 4 & 5 Officers, and transfers/postings continued unabated despite the understanding that mid-academic year transfers will be minimized. It has become a practice to carry out the transfer exercise throughout the year, little realizing that the Officer has a family and children. Most of the time the education of the children get disrupted when they are transferred in the middle of the academic year. Getting admission at quality Schools for their children also becomes difficult. The Association had been for long demanding that transfer of Officers has to be completed within the month of June every year. In many cases Officers are transferred out of Branches within a few months violating the norm of a minimum 2 years period of stay at a Branch/Office in the name of administrative transfers. In some cases the officers were posted with dual responsibilities in complete violation of Bank's laid down norms. Compassionate transfer cases were ignored despite our repeated requests to adjust the same. The anomalies pointed out by us have been ignored and Circle management continue to proceed with unilateral approach.

DEMANDS

1. SELF-RESPECT & DIGNITY OF OFFICERS AT WORKPLACE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE CIRCULAR IN LETTER AND SPIRIT AS PER BANK'S INSTRUCTIONS.

The Bank's circular instructions on work life balance should be implemented in letter and spirit across the circle with no calling on Sundays/ holidays except exigencies and no late night meetings, no denial of station leaves on holidays.

2. TIMELY PAYMENT OF REIMBURSEMENT OF INCIDENTAL EXPENDITURE AND GRANTING OF COMPENSATORY OFF FOR WORKING ON HOLIDAYS TO ALL ELIGIBLE OFFICERS.

The concept of "weekend" is a universal phenomenon and widely accepted proposition. Holidays and weekly offs are necessary to rejuvenate and attend work with greater energy and vigour. The holidays are an opportunity for the Officer to fulfil his family needs, social obligations & spend quality time with the family. The situation for the officers in our Circle is very bad with no time for family/social obligation. A circle level portal for monitoring of working on Sundays/ holidays and record of payments thereof, should be developed.

Shubhajyoti Chattopadhyay

General Secretary

Mobile : 9434551152

3. POSTING SUPPORT OFFICER FOR SINGLE OFFICER BRANCHES IN RESPECTIVE REGIONS.

The number of Single Officer Branches at the Circle has been increasing steadily. The difficulties of Single Officer Branches in canvassing business and following up loans and advances are well known to the Bank. Many of these Single Officer Branches have huge business and customer base. Officers of these Branches find it difficult to avail even a day's leave in case of necessity. Without two Officers, the Branch Manager cannot go out for business development and in order to mitigate the hardship faced by such officers and to enable them to perform to their optimum level, it is necessary to have a minimum of two Officers. All the Single Officer Branches are to be posted with one more support Officer in the respective regions immediately.

4. PAYMENT OF WATER SCARCITY ALLOWANCE TO ALL ELIGIBLE OFFICERS.

The payment of water scarcity allowance for eligible officers posted in hilly regions in J&K, Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh is pending for more than 2 years now. This should be immediately paid.

5. COMPLETE STOPPAGE ON USE OF 'WHATSAPP' FOR OFFICIAL PURPOSES, AS PER BANK'S INSTRUCTIONS

Bank has already issued instructions regarding complete sunset on use of 'WhatsApp' for official work. We thus demand that 'Whatsapp' should not be used as a tool for assigning or review of official work or sharing of official instructions in the Circle. Emails and letters, the recognized and reliable means of communication, should be used.

6. HOLDING OF PERIODIC BILATERAL MEETINGS

Bilateral forums and structured platforms were created with an intention to sort out IR/HR issues at various levels and create a congenial industrial relations atmosphere. It is also a forum to mutually interact, share and appreciate each other's concerns. As the Association is a conduit, cushion between the members and the Management and act as catalysts, there is bounden duty on the part of the Management to maintain the sanctity of various structured forums. But to our dismay the Zonal Negotiation Council Meetings are not conducted regularly in some modules. We, therefore, urge upon the Circle Management the need to hold periodical bilateral meetings, share the minutes before finalizing & sharing the action taken report.