

STATE BANK OF INDIA OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

(BENGAL CIRCLE)



(Registered under Trade Unions Act 1926-Regd. No. 6908)
"Samriddhi Bhavan", E-Block, 6th Floor, 1, Strand Road, Kolkata – 700 001
Phone: (033) 2210 2210

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

Circular No. 24/2026

Date : 15.01.2026

To All Members (Please Circulate)

We reproduce the press release dated 15.01.2026 issued by the General Secretary, AIBOC and endorsed by AIBOC (WBSU) vide their Circular No. 6/2026 dated 15.01.2026, the contents of which are self-explicit.

With revolutionary greetings,

Shubhajyoti Chattopadhyay
(General Secretary)

DATE: 15.01.2026

Press Release

AIBOC Demands Proper Security Arrangements for the Employees and Officers Deployed in SIR Duty of the Election Commission of India

Guwahati | 15th January 2026: AIBOC, the largest banking sector trade union organisation worldwide, representing around 3.25 lakh members, expresses grave concern over the deployment of bank officers as Electoral Roll Micro Observers (ERMO) for the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process in West Bengal from 26 December 2025 to 14 February 2026, nearly one and a half months, coinciding with the most critical quarter-end and year-end banking period. AIBOC apprehends that such prolonged diversion of officers from core banking duties will disrupt internal and external regulatory compliance, accounting closures, audit-related work, and the achievement of statutory/business targets. This will directly impact customer service and operational outcomes, and will also severely affect the implementation of other government-sponsored initiatives.

While bank officers have consistently cooperated with lawful public duties in the larger national interest, the scale, timing, and prolonged nature of these deployments are now materially impairing essential banking functions and exposing banks to avoidable operational, compliance, and service risks. Such deployments also cause significant personal disruption to officers, affecting performance continuity, training obligations, and legitimate career progression.

AIBOC strongly objects to the manner in which many officers in West Bengal have been compelled to travel long distances (about 750–800 km in several cases) for training at Kolkata and then again to places of engagement, largely at their own expense, with inadequate logistical support from the State Election Authorities.

AIBOC is further alarmed that the deployment instructions do not clearly provide for insurance coverage, clear medical/family emergency release protocols, or unambiguous reimbursement arrangements, exposing officers to avoidable personal and occupational risks. This concern has already materialised with an incident of an unprovoked attack on micro observers in Farakka, West Bengal, where a group of miscreants walked into the office of the concerned ERO unhindered, ransacked and vandalised the office, and caused two micro observers to sustain physical injuries.

Alarmingly, there was no security/police protection; the micro observers were left at the mercy of the unruly mob and had to fend for themselves.

AIBOC strongly condemns such incidents and holds the Election Commission responsible for abdication of its duty to protect deputed officials.

State Bank of India Officers' Association
(BENGAL CIRCLE)

:2:

This incident is illustrative, and more such incidents are poised to occur in an antagonised atmosphere where bank officers, as micro observers, are exposed to personal risk in an unprotected and dogmatic environment. Notwithstanding this precarious situation, additional officers, including lady officers, are being deployed afresh as micro observers, which further heightens the seriousness of the concern.

AIBOC is also deeply aggrieved to note that West Bengal appears to be the only state where Public Sector Bank (PSB) officers are being engaged for the SIR process, while private sector bank staff are kept in abeyance for such engagements reflecting an unfair and discriminatory approach toward PSBs and their employees.

AIBOC wishes to draw the attention of policymakers to a fundamental question: **why are public sector banks routinely benchmarked against private peers on performance parameters, while simultaneously being tasked with extensive government-sponsored scheme delivery and repeatedly requisitioned for diverse government initiatives and administrative duties?**

AIBOC demands that such non-banking engagements be duly accounted for in business parameters either through monetisation or appropriate adjustment of key benchmarks so that PSBs and their employees are not unfairly assessed or penalised.

AIBOC intends to draw the attention of the concerned authorities to dissuade this continuing practice of deploying bank officers for non-banking jobs which directly impacts both individuals and banks' performance, and which also goes against the directives of the Election Commission of India as articulated through Letter No. 464/INST/EPS/2023 (Election Official) dated 7 June 2023, which categorically states that bank employees should be engaged to the minimum extent possible and only in constituencies where there is an inadequate number of manpower or in emergent circumstances such as strike etc. AIBOC expects such instruction to not remain confined to letters, but to be followed in true spirit and action.

It also remains alarming that this impugned deployment during such a crucial period is poised to drastically harm officers' career and training interests, including conflicts with structured training for Probationary/Trainee Officers, promotional examinations scheduled during the deployment period, and the risk of missing mandatory learning/Role Based Certification requirements (as per RBI guidelines). These carry a direct impact on career progression and emoluments, and also affect performance scoring at the respective bank level.

AIBOC demands immediate intervention at the highest level including escalation to the Department of Financial Services (DFS) to stop or substantially curtail such prolonged non-banking deployment of bank officers during the critical quarter/year-end window, in line with election-related requisitioning guidelines that emphasise roster-based

State Bank of India Officers' Association
(BENGAL CIRCLE)

: 3 :

selection, exemptions for essential categories, and requisitioning only to the minimum extent necessary so that critical public services are not adversely affected.

Banking operations are specialised, time-bound, and compliance-critical, and cannot be interrupted casually without systemic consequences. Election Commission instructions emphasising minimal requisitioning, and that banks/LIC should be drafted only to the minimum extent possible, must be taken into cognisance in both letter and spirit.

AIBOC further demands immediate safeguards for all deployed officers, ensuring:

- Written clarity on travel arrangements and full reimbursement of travel and halting expenses.
- Insurance coverage and clear safety/logistics protocols for the entire deployment period.
- Transparent rules for release on medical emergencies and urgent family exigencies.
- Protection of training and examination schedules (including promotional exams) and fair relaxations/waivers where mandatory learning/exams were missed due to deployment.

Rationalisation of annual budget targets and appraisal parameters for affected officers (and impacted controllers/senior management), so officers are not penalised for enforced diversion from banking work.

AIBOC calls upon the Election Commission of India, the State Election authorities, and the Department of Financial Services to act immediately to ensure the safety, dignity, and fair treatment of all officers requisitioned for SIR duties, and to prevent further disruption of essential banking services during the critical quarter/year-end period. AIBOC reiterates that bank officers will continue to cooperate with lawful public duties in the national interest, but such cooperation cannot be at the cost of personal safety, unequal treatment, and avoidable impairment of core banking and compliance functions. AIBOC will pursue the matter at all appropriate levels until these deployments are rationalised and adequate safeguards are assured in both policy and implementation.

Sd/-

Rupam Roy
General Secretary