

THE FEDERATION OF BANK OF INDIA OFFICERS' ASSOCIATIONS

(REGD.No.7364)

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TO ALL OUR MEMBERS

Dear Comrades,

HAPPY NEW YEAR

The world is all set to usher in the New Year. A new year always brings in its wake exuberance, fresh thinking and new hopes. Let us imbibe the New Year spirit and resolve to face the future with greater courage and confidence.

The year that has rolled by brought to the Mankind its share of misfortunes - both natural and manmade. Many lives were lost and great damages were suffered on account of nature's fury. The devastation wrought by the super typhoon in Philippines is still green in our memory. Nearer home, the people of States like Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Orissa and Uttarakhand underwent untold sufferings due to natural calamities. The holy shrine at Kedarnath was devastated and a number of pilgrims perished.

Political strife engulfed many parts of the world. Proxy wars continue to be fought on different fronts. The US drone attacks have undermined national boundaries and sovereignty. Syria is in the throes of civil war. In Egypt, various groups are fighting violently for political power after the ouster of elected president by the army within one year of his election. Our neighbourhood remains volatile. The extremist elements are posing serious challenge to democracy in Pakistan and Bangladesh. The Tamil ethnic issue in Sri Lanka has spilled over to India and is creating political reverberation within the country. The US withdrawal from Afghanistan will add new dimensions to the Indian security concerns.

Notwithstanding the dark clouds, signs of positive changes are discernible on the horizon. The Iranian nuclear deal came as a refreshing contrast to the past confrontationist approach and provided clear signals of an emerging multi-polar world dispensation. Pope Francis has already surprised the world with his unconventional approach to men and matters. Under his leadership the life and doctrine of Catholic Church seem to be poised for major changes. He has emerged as an unexpected critic of unbridled capitalism and predatory finance capital. The social network has emerged as a powerful tool for organising mass action. Movements like Arab spring and 'occupy Wall Street' gave clear indication of the potential. All over the world governments are scared and attempts are on to control the media. After the Snowden revelations of mass US surveillance, opposition to the US control of internet has gained momentum. In India the government's

attempts to curb the internet has evoked serious protests. The major role played by the social media in the emergence of 'AAP' at Delhi as a major political force should be an eye opener to the trade unions. The potential of social networking in organising protests needs to be tapped.

Erosion of values in public life in the country remains a major concern. Despite protests and rhetoric, the violence against women continues unabated. The civil society has forced the hands of the government on Lokpal Bill. The recent assembly elections gave a clear expression of people's disenchantment with the misrule and corruption of the UPA government. The common man is reeling under price rise and inflation continues to be a major worry. The government continues to follow neo-liberal policies unmindful of the growing social divide they spawn. The unorganised sectors have borne the brunt. The migrant labours are undergoing inhuman exploitation in different parts of the country. This is a major challenge to trade unions and call for concerted action.

All over the world strong sentiments are visible against the damage caused by the foot loose finance capital to the national economies. Diverse movements have sprung up in different parts of the world questioning the GDP focused development paradigm. The call for an alternative sustainable development model with focus on human development index and environment protection is getting louder. There is a growing realisation that when our planet's resources are finite, growth cannot be infinite. The evolving situation calls for greater alacrity on the part of trade unions in crafting strategies.

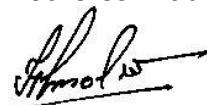
The Indian Banking industry is on the threshold of major structural changes. Private Corporates would be given banking licenses shortly. Foreign banks will be given free hand to open more branches. The old private sector banks will face increasing take-over threats from foreign banks. The finance minister is still harping on merger and consolidation. The concept of local area banks is back in circulation. Real threats are looming large over us. The government and IBA are totally insensitive to the restlessness among bank employees over the indefensible and inordinate delay in wage revision. Long struggle is on cards. Efforts are on to drive the wedge and divide us. We need to respond and hit back with greater unity and solidarity to bring sense to the government and IBA.

Our New Year resolution should be to scale greater heights of glory and achievement. Let us be in the fore front in fighting the injustice around us. Let us resolve to achieve an early wage revision and realise other long pending demands. Let us hope the New Year will herald a brighter future for our country and the world.

**WE WISH OUR MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES
A VERY HAPPY, PROSPEROUS AND SUCCESSFUL 2014 !!**

With warm greetings,

Yours comradely,



(HARVINDER SINGH)
GENERAL SECRETARY