

# THE FEDERATION OF BANK OF INDIA OFFICERS' ASSOCIATIONS

(REGD.No.7364)

Regd.Office: Bank of India Bldgs., 70-80, M.G.Road, Mumbai – 400 023.



**OFFICE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY,  
C/o Bank Of India, Parliament Street Br.  
PTI Bldg., 4 Parliament Street, New Delhi:110001  
Phone:011-23719431, Fax :011-23719431  
Resi: 011-23822211  
E-mail: [fboia@yahoo.co.in](mailto:fboia@yahoo.co.in).**



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Dear Comrades,

## **ALL INDIA GENERAL STRIKE ON 20<sup>th</sup>& 21<sup>st</sup> FEBRUARY,2013** **HIT OUT THOSE WHO HAVE HIT THE COMMON PEOPLE**

A Grave crisis has set in affecting millions of people in the country. The sky high inflation of food prices and stagnation of the economy are the characteristics of the crisis that has engulfed the nation. It is grim all round, politically and economically. The Government has lost all its credibility. Struck by charges of corruption repeatedly, it is almost non-functional. The colossal failure of the political system to provide the basic rights of life to the people of the country is shameful. The Government seems to have no effective strategy to face the challenge exposing the common people to the brunt of the deepening crisis.

The entire nation has fallen victim to the neo liberal economic policy. The working people, the unorganized labour, contract, casual and informal workers in urban and rural areas are the worst hit. Jobs are disappearing. The real purchasing power of the working masses is impacted. The working conditions have badly deteriorated. Minimum wage is not paid. Statutory benefits are withdrawn. No old age pension, no maternity benefits are being provided. Labour laws are grossly violated. The working hours are abnormally lengthened. Wages are below the minimum. Trade unionism is being scuttled. Working class protest is suppressed. The domestic and foreign corporates in collusion with the government have let loose merciless attack on the working people. There is a talk of making labour laws more flexible to make hire and fire easy for the employers. Situation has become unbearable.

The largest numbers of poor people live in India. According to the World Hunger Index, India is one of the most affected countries. According to a worldwide survey, health parameters in India are one of the lowest. In a recent judgment, the Supreme Court has pointed out a wide prevalence of bonded labour in India. Even the Labour Ministry had to admit that in a large number of States Minimum Wage Act is widely violated. Over the years labour productivity has increased. Even during crisis, profits of the corporates have jumped, but the real producers of wealth did not receive the price of their labour. Sexual atrocities on young working women are pronounced. More than 63 years of India's freedom and more than 53 years of planning has bypassed all the human fundamentals.

While industry is deeply affected, agriculture is also in crisis. The industrial production has gone down and agriculture output is unstable. Service sector is also adversely affected. On one hand, retrenchment and job loss is taking place in industrial sector, on the other, in agriculture; distress sale of harvest is becoming rampant due to denial of Bank credits and non availability of adequate power supply to farmers leading to large scale suicides of the peasants. The agricultural workers do not get job throughout the year and their wages are abysmally low.

Investment in economy has dipped over years, GDP has declined. The story of economic growth has exploded. The planning process seems to have benefited the rich, widening the gap between the rich and the poor and denying the elementary right of living to overwhelming majority of the people. The Government has no effective policy to curb the price and contain the recession of the economy, mitigate poverty and job loss. It is only inviting

foreign capital, doling out concessions, rolling out red carpet as if FDI can step up the economic growth benefiting the common people.

While it is necessary to expand government investment, stimulate market, create job, build up huge infrastructure as an effective measure to counter the slowdown of economy, it is reining expenditure, curtailing plan and non-plan budget, abolishing vacancies in the public sector and government. Even elementary social schemes like NREGA, health and education schemes are all affected. In fact, the government is pruning expenditure in the vital social sectors in the name of fiscal consolidation.

While private capital has a role to play in the economic development of the country, in a crisis as we face today the vital is government expenditure and investment. It is also necessary to spend more to fight illiteracy, hunger, poverty, joblessness, pauperisation of the peasantry and ruination of the agricultural labour force. If the government moves in this direction, it will give relief to the people.

Turning its back to the national interest, the government is initiating steps one after another which is inflaming inflation and accentuating economic stagnation. The increase in the diesel price is the point in question as there is a talk of further increase of diesel price. Cap on use of subsidised LPG shall cause disaster to the middle class families. The increase in railway fare and freight is imminent along with rise in Power tariff. The coal price is also going to be enhanced. The government is recklessly increasing the price of all the commodities that is so urgently necessary for daily life. Retail market has been opened up to world multinationals like Wal-mart which seriously endangers the livelihood of the small shopkeepers and employees and street vendors who are crores in number.

While subsidized universal rationing system has been virtually abandoned, there is a talk of cash transfer to the poor people. The scheme may prove to be disastrous as it has been confirmed by experience in Jharkhand. The nationalized banking system and the insurance sectors which have insulated India from the convulsion of the international money market are sought to be undermined by induction of private capital. The disinvestment of the profit making public sector is deeply corroding into the vitals of the Indian economy.

While neo-liberal economic policy has made the lives of the people miserable over years, the recent stagnation of the economic development and sky high inflation has further caused significant human distress in the country.

It is not only organized workers in the industrial sector who are grossly affected, but the contract workers, informal and casual labour are the worst victim. While the industrial workers who are organized are sure to be denied of the legitimate rights, increase in bonus and wages, the unorganized sector will be more adversely affected through job loss, wage cut, and non-payment of minimum wage and denial of statutory dues.

The women who are joining the labour force in large numbers are more and more harassed by the management and minimum primacy the service condition is denied and wage discrimination is widely practiced. The huge army of Anganwadi workers, health workers, mid-day meal workers and domestic workers are predominantly women. They are subjected to social atrocity, denial of reasonable wage. This is again another example of government policy which leads to disempowerment of working women.

Banking sector is no exception. Attempts are on to reduce and dilute the Government's equity capital in Public Sector Banks and to boost private capital in the equity of our PSBs. For public sector banks, the Government talks of mergers and consolidation to shrink the scope of social banking. But in the same breath, the Government wants to encourage and expand private sector banking. New licenses are sought to be given to industrial houses to start their own private Banks. This speaks of the double standard of the Government. Banking Laws are amended to convert bad loans of corporate houses as investments in the equity capital of the very same defaulters. Huge loans are being written off to favour the rich borrowers. Rural branches are sought to be closed down and rural banking is being outsourced to Private Business Correspondents. Because of retrogratory policies of the Government, Corporate loans are being given more thrust at the cost of **Priority sector loan**. Banks are appearing to drift from the goals and objectives of bank nationalization. In one word, the clock is sought to be reversed to privatise the profits and nationalise the losses.

All recognized eleven trade unions coming together on the same platform having 10 point charter has opened up new possibility of developing resistance against the attack unleashed by Government and the corporate. For the last three years, the united trade union movement has made a significant advance, having one day historic strike on 28<sup>th</sup> February in 2012, there have been rail roko, jail bhara, even a massive march to Parliament. While the Prime Minister talks to the tax evaders, the delinquent industrialists who have never cared to follow the principles of industrial democracy and indulging in reckless violation of labour laws but does not have the elementary courtesy of talking to the trade union representatives on their demands, knowing fully well that no country in the world can advance and make economic progress if the working masses remain discontented and bypassed.

Therefore, in a situation when the Government mounts attack on the people, is apathetic to the rising gravity of distress of the working masses and does not follow realistic policy regime to protect the people who are in the backyard of the economy, it is incumbent for us to stimulate the agitation, taking it to a higher level and as such a call for **Two-day strike for first time in the history of India has been given on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of February, 2013** on the eve of the presentation of the Union Budget with a slogan:

**“Hit out those who have hit the comon people”**. Mount counter-offensive to stall the atrocity of the Government.

We appeal to all bank employees of our country and the entire working masses to unitedly make the call of a two-day general strike a grand success. It is only militant mass action that can bring the government to senses. It is heartening to note that not only the eleven trade unions but almost all the unaffiliated unions, federations and associations have supported the call of the two-day general strike.

It is the right moment to make a mass intervention. Indignation against the government is brewing. The spontaneous outburst of anger is taking place everywhere. The people boiling in the fire of inflation must be brought to the street to paralyse the government and all its apparatus to demonstrate the strength of the masses opposed to the unfair and unjust policies of the government.

The country must come to a halt on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of February, 2013. Working class people must withdraw from all the work places. Banking industry should come to a grinding halt. The Government must be paralysed. That is the only way to resist the aggression of the Government and win the demands for the benefit of the people. The strength of unity that provides an opportunity must be utilized to convert the crisis into a new wave of resistance.

### **NEW GUEST HOUSE AT HYDERABAD**

We are pleased to inform you that as per the decision taken by the Executive Committee of our Federation, a residential property has been purchased at Hyderabad for the purpose of Guest House of the Federation. The property is situated at the heart of the city in Lakad ka Pul area, near Hyderabad Zonal Office of our Bank. The property is acquired at a cost price of Rs. 59 lacs plus registration fees paid thereon. The formalities of Registration have been completed jointly by Com. Sanjeev Tamhane and Com. A.V.V. Raghavarao and the possession has also been taken by them on behalf of the Federation. The Guest House is expected to be operation after renovation and furnishing which is expected to take approx. two months time. We congratulate the entire membership of our Federation for another step taken in the direction of welfare of the members.

### **IMPACT OF PARTICIPATION IN STRIKE ON TERMINAL BENEFITS**

At the time of 2 day's Strike call observed on 22<sup>nd</sup>& 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2012, some doubts were raised by some of our members who were retiring in few months after the strike about the effect of their participation in the strike on the terminal benefits. When the issue was raised by the units before us, we clarified the position vide our circular No. 2012/28 dated 24/08/2012 that participation in the strike will not have any impact, whatsoever, on the quantum of terminal benefits and quoted the relevant provisions from regulation 38(4) of Bank of India (employees) Pension Regulation (1995). We once again reproduce hereunder the provision:

**QUOTE:** If during the last ten months of the service an employee has been absent from duty on extraordinary leave on loss of pay or had been under suspension and the period whereof does not count as service, the aforesaid period of extraordinary leave or suspension shall not be taken into account in the calculation of the average emoluments and an equal period before the ten months shall be included **UNQUOTE**

We therefore, once again request our members that they should dispel all confusions and apprehensions and participate in the strike with fullest enthusiasm.

### **PARTICIPATION IN THE STRIKE BY SCALE IV MEMBERS**

We would once again like to thank and appreciate the cooperation and solidarity expressed by our members of Scale IV who participated in the previous two days' strike held on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2012. The participation was hundred percent in some zones like Delhi and Bihar and overall nearly forty percent. We are confident that the apprehensions in the mind of all such members have been belied by now. We once again appeal to all our officers of scale IV, who are our members to understand the need of the hour and show their solidarity by participating in the strike.

**Long Live Our Unity !**

**With Revolutionary Greetings.**

Yours comradely,



**(HARVINDER SINGH)  
GENERAL SECRETARY**