



ALL INDIA BANK OFFICERS' CONFEDERATION

(Registered under the Trade Unions Act 1926, Registration No.:3427/Delhi)

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Press Release

All India Bank Officers Confederation, the largest officers' organization having membership of around 280000 officers condemns the Notification issued by Reserve Bank of India, the regulator of banks in India advising that all Agency Banks have to keep all their branches dealing with government business open on all days in the current financial year and on 1st April 2017 including Saturday, Sunday and all holidays to facilitate government receipt and payment functions. The notification has been issued late in the evening on 24th March 2017 leaving us in total mess. The most unfortunate part of the story is that the RBI has made the notification public without even informing the member banks beforehand about the same. Many of us, while working late in the branches, had been updated by the public that the branches would remain open on the weekends as per the instruction of the RBI. History bears the testimony that we have never lagged behind to respond to any of the call made by the govt. of India. We have always been the front-runner in implementing the various govt. sponsored schemes/plans, be it Jan Dhan Yojana or Demonetisation for that matter. But this time, due to the short time notification given by the RBI we have to face a lot of hardships. Because of the weekend, many of our officers have left the station and

many had preoccupation with their families and friends. Now, because of this short notice and *talibani* diktat sort of thing, we have to forego all our plans and personal lives and attend offices sacrificing the weekends and all the festivals. It is also to be noted that *Chaitra Navaratri*, a multi-day Hindu Festival celebrated in many parts of the country begins from 28th March. *Ugadi*, *Gudi Padwa* and many other festivals come in between the period from 25th March to 1st April. Now, because of this notification issued by the RBI, we will not be able to celebrate any of these festivals with our families and friends which is nothing short of hurting the religious sentiments of our people. We, the bankers, have always responded to any national call positively and sacrificed everything to make the mission of the government successful. For instance, post demonetization; we all have worked day in and day out to ensure our fellow countrymen can overcome the crisis of new currency notes in no time. We worked on weekends compromising with our personal lives and sacrificed the festivals since we knew that it was a national call and the motive was to make a corruption free India. We went beyond our capabilities and in the process some of our colleagues had to sacrifice their lives as well succumbing to huge pressure resulting from the uncontrollable footfalls in the branch premises. We had to face the wrath of the public and in many places the angry mob vandalized our branches and man-handled our colleagues. Unfortunately, no one came to our rescue at that time. To the contrary, the government was consistent on its commitment in the media that there was no scarcity of new currencies and all the banks have been sufficiently supplied with the new notes. However, the bitter truth was that RBI failed miserably to supply sufficient currencies to the banks which is the only reason for the death of our officers and the vandalism of many branches. At this juncture, we are not to showcase what we did in the past for the country and the fellow countrymen and we are firm that history will do the talking for us. But, the current notification issued by the RBI is beyond the acceptance limit of the bankers' fraternity. There was no prior information available with the Bank and the communication was forwarded through what's-app and other social media by the respective bank management to the employees very late on 24th March night. It gives immense pain to see that of late the bank employees, particularly the nationalised banks

employees, are being treated very shabbily and everytime we are being made the scapegoats.

The Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi launched the Digital India Programme almost two years ago and since then he has left no stone unturned to materialize it. One of the primary initiatives of Digital India programme was "e-governance;" and now we understand that most of the state Govt. treasury offices function through e-platform and the filing of income tax is also through electronic mode. It is very surprising to see that when The "Digital India" campaign is promoted throughout the length and breadth of the country, an abrupt instruction taken in haste has been issued by RBI. It is nothing but stretching the bankers to extreme only to provide an additional cushion to the Govt. agencies and tax payers. When the responsibility of paying tax could not be undertaken by the citizens during the whole financial year, the logic of keeping the branches open extra for two to three holidays does not really suffice. We also smell that this instruction might have been given by the RBI to provide more time to deposit the money under the controversial Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Deposit Scheme (PMGKDS), 2016. The deposits under this Scheme could be made from the 17th day of December, 2016 till 31st day of March, 2017, by any person who declared undisclosed income under sub-section (1) of section 199C of the Taxation and Investment Regime for Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, 2016. However, it is believed that the amount of deposits that the government anticipated has not come through the banking channel and hence this step has been taken.

Be it Jan Dhan Yojana, demonetisation or be it making the treasury functions online, the reliance of the government on employees still exposes the fact that nothing can replace human resources and it is imperative to deal with the most important factor in developing an economy more sensibly than to treat it as an commodity with an use and throw attitude. An employee as he is duty bound to his job, similarly he is duty bound to his personal self and family as well which practically has dragged him to his job place. The current instruction at the late hours has forced the officers/ employees to sacrifice their family obligations and their weekend plans which is sure to have a negative impact.

We have sent letters to the Governor of RBI and DFS to look into the matter and come up with a solution at the earliest so that we are not forced to contemplate organisational steps including mass movements and employee mobilization.

D. T. Franco
General Secretary