

ALL INDIA BANK OFFICERS' CONFEDERATION

(Registered under the Trade Unions Act 1926, Registration No.3427/Delhi)
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Circular No. 2020/30

Date:18.03.2020


To All Affiliates (Please Circulate)

Dear Comrade,

ADVISORY ISSUED BY A&N ADMINISTRATIONS – OUR RESPONSE

We have sent a letter to the Dy. Secretary (Fin), Andaman & Nicobar Islands Administration expressing our resentment against one advisory issued by them for extension of banking hours at all bank branches from 8.00 a.m. Text of the letter is appended.

With greetings,


(Soumya Datta)
General Secretary

Text of Letter No. AIBOC/2020/14 dated 18.03.2020

Ref No. AIBOC/2020/14

Date: 18.03.2020

Deputy Secretary (Fin-I)
A&N Administration
Secretariat Building
Port Blair
South Andaman – 744101

Dear Sir,

**ADVISORY BY ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ADMINISTRATION
EXTENSION OF BANKING HOURS TO CHECK CORONAVIRUS**

Greetings from All India Bank Officers' Confederation (AIBOC), the largest supervisory cadre trade union commanding a membership of over 3.20 lakh officers in the banking industry.

Our attention is drawn to an official advisory received from Andaman & Nicobar (A&N) administration addressed to the Regional Manager, State Bank of India (Lead Bank), regarding the captioned matter.

We appreciate your concerns and the official arrangements being put in place by the government and the local administration throughout the country and pledge our wholehearted support to the cause of fighting the menace of the COVID-19 virus. However, we are constrained to note that the purpose of social distancing to check the COVID-19 virus has not served, rather it is defeated, through the referred advisory. Our observations on the same, which we would like you to examine, are hereunder:

- i. Extension of Banking hours are necessitated and also resorted to in case of emergent financial situations affecting the people at large to facilitate the delivery of cash and other financial services. We note that usually, the Banks operate with extended service hours during the year-end closing of books and also to meet other specific requirements by the government (e.g. Demonetisation, flood, cyclone, and other calamities). We are always ready to serve the nation, but in this case, no financial emergency has either been perceived or announced by the

government or the RBI. So, the decision of extending of office hours by the banks apparently makes no sense apparently, in the first place.

- ii. While taking administrative measures to fight a pandemic, it is necessary that measures to be vetted by the medical authority and preferably backed by guidelines issued by the World Health Organisation (WHO). In the instant matter, it is not clear whether the advisory is backed by any medical advice. As far as we understand that the medical facilities at A&N Islands are yet to match those available in other cities of the country. Hence, this measure of extension of working hours to combat the pandemic is not appropriate. Such kind of advisory has not been made by any state so far.
- iii. You may kindly also note that the premise of “social distancing” is not served with the extended hours. It only extends the period of banking hours for the customers which increases chances of any possible contamination. In our opinion, the advisory to extend the banking hours will prove counterproductive and increase the vulnerability of the staff members at the branch which will also affect the customers.
- iv. Worldwide and even in our own country, employees are being advised to “work from home” unless their presence in the workplace is absolutely necessary. The need of the hour is to curtail office hours so as to resist contamination and we would like you to ponder over this issue. In fact, the administration needs to help the banks to sanitize the premises meticulously during the spare time available by curtailing the daily office hours.
- v. Your good office is well aware that the bank employees are one of the most vulnerable targets of any virulent pandemic because they cannot avoid close proximity of customers across counters or handling of currency notes which are carriers of many diseases. We expect your co-operation in this regard to minimize cash transactions under your jurisdictions to the barest minimum and issue advisory to the public to avoid cash transactions and visit to bank branches for non-financial transactions e.g. passbook printing etc. as far as practicable.

We hope you will consider the logical exposition of facts as above and immediately reverse the advisory after a review. While we assure you of our best cooperation, we also expect full cooperation from you and your administration in ensuring the safety of all our members and colleagues serving in the A&N territory.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-
(Soumya Datta)
General Secretary