

ALL INDIA BANK OFFICERS' CONFEDERATION

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Circular No. 2020/34

Date:27.03.2020

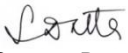
To All Affiliates (Please Circulate)

Dear Comrade,

AIBOC WRITES TO THE HON'BLE FINANCE MINISTER OF INDIA PROPOSING A SLEW OF CRITICAL MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED FOR THE BANKMEN AND BUSINESS CORRESPONDENTS WORKERS

We have sent a communiqué to the Hon'ble Finance Minister of India vide our letter no. AIBOC/2020/18 dated 27.03.2020 on the captioned subject. Copy of the same has also been sent to the Hon'ble Minister of State for Finance, Govt. of India and the Finance Secretary, Govt of India. Text of the communication is appended.

With greetings,


(Soumya Datta)
General Secretary

Text of Letter No. AIBOC/2020/18 dated 27.03.2020

Ref No. AIBOC/2020/18

Date: 27.03.2020

Smt. Nirmla Sitharaman
Hon'ble Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs
Government of India
North Block
New Delhi

Respected Madam,

Coronavirus Relief Package announced by the Government – further critical measures proposed

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

This communiqué relates to the economic relief measures that your good office announced yesterday afternoon in the backdrop of the nationwide lockdown to arrest the spread of the dreaded Covid-19. We feel that the lockdown is a much needed step and the economic relief measures for the weaker sections of the society initiated by the government are most welcome at this critical hour. We also appreciate the proposal of the government in covering the healthcare workers, including doctors, nurses and sanitation workers, who are in frontline in the fight against the deadly virus, with insurance cover of Rs.50 lakh per head. This is a right initiative in recognising the noble and selfless service being rendered by such persons.

2. Madam, from the measures announced by the government, it transpires that majority of them are the ones which are intended to provide economic/financial relief to the citizenry, calling upon the deeper involvement of banks and its officers and staff and the BC channel. DBT to identified eight categories of beneficiaries, release of 'Kisan Samman Nidhi' first installment in first week of April, disbursement of increased wage revision under MGNREGA, ex-gratia through 'Jandhan' accounts, collateral free loans to women SHGs, disbursal/withdrawal of non-refundable advance from EPF accounts *et al* are basically bank-centric activities. Disbursement of collateral free loans to women SHGs will definitely devolve humungous workload on bank officers. It may please be taken cognizance of that, under the circumstances, where entire society is being forced upon to 'Stay at Home, Stay Safe', maintaining social distance from each other, bank officers and employees are constrained to take extra load, to work for extra hours, to undergo extra pain, besides contacting and meeting more and more people, thereby exposing themselves to grave risk of contagion and in turn, spread of the same to their families. It is therefore necessary that they and their families need to be insulated from risks arising from such obvious eventualities.

3. You will appreciate that bank employees and officers constitute the 'financial army' of the country, who are extending banking facilities to the customers all over the country, risking their own lives and also the same of their family members even at the time of this all pervading catastrophe. We apprehend that in view of the measures announced by the government now, bank branches across the nation will be drawing huge footfall in the coming weeks. Bankers will be required to work in the fullness of time and perhaps more than the schedule, with a view to implementing the special economic package to the desired level. In the fitness of things, it is the dire necessity and therefore it would be most humane, minimum and legitimate step on the part of the government to extend insurance cover of Rs.50 lakh per head to the bankmen as well, as they are also required to provide a very essential service to the society risking contamination. Additionally, we urge upon your good office to put in place a policy that immediate compassionate appointment be given to the next of the kin of any employees, if they lay down their lives, in the line of duty having been affected with the dreaded COVID-19. Furthermore, we recommend that the insurance coverage should also be extended to the Business Correspondents working at the counter of Customer Service Points providing service especially to the 'Jandhan' a/c holders so as to make them feel secured at this moment while extending their uninterrupted service.

4. We also urge upon you to ensure that proper logistic and administrative support is extended to all employees and officers, who will be required to commute from their residences to branches / offices in this critical period. Considering that majority of the bank employees and officers are required to travel a long way and in the given scenario are required to incur a huge expenditure just for everyday travelling as public transport has been suspended, they may also be adequately compensated. Further, adequate administrative support is extended to ensure that the branches are not congested in the coming weeks so as to enable us to perform our duty of providing the essential services delineated by IBA and at the same time, implementing the schemes introduced by your office in a successful and desired manner.

5. Further, in view of the proposed amalgamation of the 10 public sectors banks, the entire process of DBT will be seriously impeded without the technological integration of the 'target' banks with the 'acquirer' banks. This will only add to the chaos and confusion of a larger scale. We, therefore, once again request you to revisit the decision of merging the public sector banks in its true perspective and have a thorough and careful study of the possible second order effects, which may be arising out of any hasty decision on immediate implementation of the 'Amalgamation Schemes' in the backdrop of announcement of "Coronavirus Relief Package", in absence of which we may rather invite the infamous 'Cobra effect' that would give rise to various unsolicited and unwelcome consequences.

6. In view of the immediate requirement of implementation of the slew of measures announced by you yesterday, we further request your good office to actively consider extension of annual closing related activities and the revision of the closing date itself from 31st March, 2020 to 30th June, 2020, which is not only the expectation of the entire banking fraternity, but also the paramount need of the hour.

7. An immediate announcement of the aforesaid critical measures including extension of insurance coverage of Rs 50 lakh per head to bankers and workers of BC channels will be highly appreciated.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-
(Soumya Datta)
General Secretary

A virus does not spread itself. It is we, who spread it.
