



NCBE VOICE



A NATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF BANK EMPLOYEES' IN HOUSE MONTHLY e-MAGAZINE

RESOLUTE IN STRUGGLE: NCBE'S COMMITMENT TO PENSION UPDATION

The journey of the Bank Employees' Pension Scheme began in 1993, initiated retrospectively to cover those who had retired on or after 01.01.1986. This scheme was drawn directly on the lines of the RBI Pension Scheme and the Central Government Pension Scheme. It was introduced in lieu of the Bank's Contribution to the Provident Fund and was designed as a Defined Benefit structure, with a corpus to be actuarially assessed annually. In the State Bank of India, pensioners have been governed by the SBI Pension Fund Rules since inception. However, even in SBI, pensions have not been revised in line with successive bipartite settlements.

For over three decades, retired employees of Public Sector Banks have been fighting a silent, gruelling battle. It is a struggle to survive in today's economy on pension amounts fixed against the cost-of-living standards of the decades old. The demand for Pension Updation and the DA merger to 8088 CPI points is not a plea for charity; it is a demand for the restoration of a statutory right that has remained unimplemented for decades.

The Denial: The reason behind

Pension updation is an explicit statutory requirement under Regulation 35(1) of the Bank Employees' Pension Regulations, 1995. This provision was further reinforced by a statutory amendment in 2003, notified in the Gazette of India during the tenure of the then Prime Minister, Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The amended provision reads as follows: "Basic Pension and Additional Pension, wherever applicable, *shall* be updated as per the *formulae*".

It would be pertinent to submit here that the formulae (Formulas) for updation of Pension in the Central Government, have undergone the modifications with successive Central Pay Commissions Recommendations as follows:

- 5th CPC: Basic Pension + DA + 40%
- 6th CPC: Basic Pension + DA + 20%
- 7th CPC / RBI (2019): Basic Pension + DA + 10%

Unfortunately, despite the statutory nature of this amendment, and despite the Government itself allowing pension updation in RBI w.e.f. March 2019, the same rightful benefit has been denied to bank pensioners for over three decades. This denial is not just discriminatory, it is a violation of subordinate legislation, passed through due process under Section 19 of the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1970/1980, tabled in both Houses of Parliament, and yet wilfully ignored by IBA under various pretexts.

To compound matters, the IBA has filed affidavits before the Hon'ble High Court and the Supreme Court asserting that "there is no provision for pension updation," despite the clear existence of Regulation 35(1) and its statutory 2003 amendment. This stand, taken in disregard of the legal framework governing bank pensions, has not only contradicted the spirit of the Regulations but has also resulted in the denial of rightful benefits to pensioners for over three decades.

The Struggle for Justice

A major obstacle in the path to justice is the current DA Anomaly. Under the 12th Bipartite Settlement, new pay scales were constructed by merging DA up to 8088 CPI points with CPI series 2016=100. However, this change was only made applicable to those retiring on or after 1.11.2022. This creates an irrational and discriminatory dual structure where the retirees before 01.11.2022 are tethered to the old CPI series (1960=100), while newer retirees benefit from the revised series.

It is pertinent to mention that the pension scheme was introduced in lieu of banks' Contribution to Provident Fund, with a Defined Benefit structure, and the corpus was to be actuarially assessed annually, just as is done for government pensioners. The Pension Fund in banks has grown substantially, now exceeding 4 lakh crore, with annual inflows far exceeding outflows, making updation financially feasible. Unlike NPAs, which banks regularly write off with provisioning, a pension is a statutory obligation backed by enforceable regulation.

The Pain of Our Seniors

The delay in justice has led to profound financial and emotional hardship for elderly retirees.

- **Plight of Octogenarians:** Many senior bank retirees are drawing pensions based on pay scales that are decades old, which are grossly insufficient in today's economic climate. At an advanced age, they are unable to meet basic needs like medicines, utilities, and food.
- **Family Pensioners:** The situation is even more distressing for widows and dependents who survive on a fraction of an already insufficient pension. They experience mental trauma and humiliation due to unbearable financial insecurity.

NCBE's Commitment

To achieve these goals, the road ahead demands unwavering collective strength and, when required, resolute agitation. This is not merely a struggle of those who have already retired; it is a fight to uphold the dignity and rights of every bank employee. By standing in solidarity today, we defend the honour and justice that define our movement.

The struggle for pension updation is not merely a line item in a charter of demands; for the NCBE, it has become a battle of professional honour and moral duty. While others may view pension updation as a distant "dream", the NCBE views it as a binding commitment. The leadership has categorically stated that they will not let the fire of this movement die out. As long as the NCBE stands at the vanguard, pension updation will not remain a fading dream. It will be forged into a reality. The Confederation will continue to fight with pens, with protests, and with the power of the law until every bank retiree can live their twilight years with the dignity, parity, and financial security they have rightfully earned.

SILVER JUBILEE CONFERENCE SBSU (KERALA) - AISBISF

The Silver Jubilee Conference of the State Bank's Staff Union Kerala Circle, an affiliate of the AISBISF, was held at Thiruvananthapuram on 15th October 2025 with great enthusiasm and impressive participation. The conference witnessed a large and vibrant gathering of members whose spirited slogans and disciplined presence reflected the strong organisational culture and deep commitment of the union fraternity.

The occasion was graced by Com. L. Chandrasekhar, General Secretary NCBE, who lauded the Kerala Circle's unity and vibrant organisational culture. He said 25 years of sustained union strength reflects collective commitment, ideological clarity, and deep camaraderie.

He cautioned that rapid technological and policy changes will reshape banking and union dynamics, making unity, awareness, and discipline vital. Urging members to protect democratic functioning and groom younger cadres, he affirmed that only strong unity can safeguard employees' rights and the future of the movement.

Adding another proud feather to the crown of Kerala Circle, the new SBSU Centre at Panavila, Thiruvananthapuram, was inaugurated Com. L. Chandrasekhar on 14.10.2025. Com Rajath H C, Organising Secretary of NCBE and President of SBSU Kerala Circle, along with Com S Akhil, Vice President of NCBE and General Secretary of SBSU Kerala Circle addressed the gathering and thanked the leadership for their unwavering support to the union.

The conference was also graced by Com Pankaj Kaushik, Senior Vice President of NCBE, Com. Anzil K N, Vice President of NCBE, Sri Sushil Kumar, General Manager Network I, and Sri Manmohan Swain, General Manager Network III. General Secretaries and Presidents of AISBISF also addressed the gathering, enriching the deliberations and adding to the celebratory spirit of the Silver Jubilee.



REGIONAL MEETING - SIBEA AT HYDERABAD

The Regional Meeting of the South Indian Bank Employees Association was held on 2nd November 2025 at Hyderabad with enthusiastic participation from members across the region.

The meeting was presided over by Com Sajo Jose Therattil, President of SIBEA. Com R Narendra Kumar, Joint Secretary, inaugurated the session, and Com N Srinivasacharyulu, Joint Secretary (Admin), attended the meeting as Chief Guest. Com Anzil K N, General Secretary of SIBEA, graced the occasion and addressed the gathering.

In his keynote address, Com Anzil outlined the Association's ongoing initiatives, organisational priorities, and the collective responsibility of members in safeguarding employee rights and strengthening unity. He emphasised the need for awareness, organisational discipline, and active involvement at the branch level.

Secretaries and representatives from the Hyderabad Circle actively participated in the deliberations. They raised various issues relating to day-to-day operational challenges in branches, service conditions, and other workplace concerns. The discussions were constructive and focused on practical solutions. Com Anzil responded to the queries in detail and provided guidance on addressing the issues within the organisational framework.

Speeches were also delivered by Com. R. Narendra Kumar, Com. N. Srinivasacharyulu, Com. Mettu Sridhar, Com. Senthil Kumar, and Com. Anand B, who highlighted the service and workplace challenges faced by employees and reiterated the importance of collective action and unity.

The meeting concluded with an interactive session, reflecting the strong engagement and commitment of members. The programme reaffirmed the spirit of solidarity and collective resolve that continues to guide the Association's journey forward.



THE JOURNEY

Inspiring... Unending...

As we trace this path, we celebrate the role of each affiliate in shaping the confederation. Their dedication, struggles, and achievements have strengthened NCBE, making it a respected voice in the banking sector. In the previous edition, we explored the formation and legacy of AISBISF and AIOBEF. In this edition, we turn our attention to the history of other NCBE affiliates that form the strong foundation of the Confederation. The journey of NCBE is unending, yet inspiring.

ALL INDIA OVERSEAS BANK EMPLOYEES' UNION (AIOBEU)

Before the formation of a unified organisation, the service conditions of Indian Overseas Bank employees reflected the challenges of a growing banking institution where employees had no collective voice. Pay, working hours, promotions, and job security varied across branches, and employees had little influence over management decisions. This lack of representation created disparities and uncertainty, highlighting the urgent need for an organisation that could protect employees' rights and negotiate effectively with management.

In this context, a group of determined employees came together to form a common platform. On 6 February 1949, the **All India Overseas Bank Employees' Union (AIOBEU)** was established under the leadership of Com. G. Nagiah as General Secretary and Com. Antony Pillai as the first President. Senior trade unionists such as Com. S.C.C. Antony Pillai, Com. S. Rajagopal, and Com. T.S. Ramanujam guided the young Union. From the start, AIOBEU was built on principles of independence, discipline, and nonpolitical trade unionism, devoted solely to the welfare of IOB employees.

The Union made its mark through decisive early actions. Management attempts to promote a yellow union were defeated by the unity and awareness of employees. The first Annual Conference at Coimbatore in 1954 consolidated the Union, and resolutions such as opposing the oppressive Free Debt Certificate were successfully enforced. The Union ensured full implementation of the benefits of the Sen Award and subsequent tribunals, often securing better terms than those granted elsewhere.

During the 1950s and 1960s, AIOBEU grew stronger under new leaders including Com. P. Balagopala Menon, Com. C.R. Chandrasekaran, Com. K.V. Balasubramanian, and Com. T.V. Ramamurthy. Com. Chandrasekaran and Com. Menon became the twin pillars of the Union, combining strategic vision, legal expertise, and empathy for employees. AIOBEU maintained its independent ideology, supporting bank nationalisation while advocating justice for workers, showing foresight in shaping national policy.

The Union played a key role in tribunals, including the Sen Tribunal in 1950, the Sastri Tribunal in 1953, the Desai Tribunal in 1960, and the Labour Appellate Tribunal in 1954. Its fearless representation ensured that IOB employees received superior implementation of allowances and emoluments.

In 1964 and 1966, AIOBEU initiated direct negotiations with IOB management, concluding a landmark wage settlement on 14th December 1966 that delivered benefits better than those in many other banks. In 1970, when management attempted to impose industry-level settlements without consulting IOB employees, the Union led a three-week struggle to assert the right to negotiate independently, successfully securing a settlement that protected employees' interests.

AIOBEU also played a pivotal role in the formation of the National Union of Bank Employees in 1969 and the National Confederation of Bank Employees in 1979, providing independent alternatives to politically influenced unions.

On 6th February 1972, AIOBEU was formally recognised by the Government of India as the sole representative of IOB employees. This recognition enabled direct participation in policy-making and representation on the Board of Directors, a privilege continuously enjoyed by Union nominees over the decades.

Between 2011 and 2016, the Union faced internal challenges that temporarily weakened its national standing. Under the principled leadership of Com. S.C. Balaji, AIOBEU restored unity, returned to NCBE affiliation, and reclaimed its position as the majority and recognised Union in IOB.

From its beginnings in 1949 to its present status, AIOBEU has championed fair service conditions, welfare, and industrial peace, maintaining its independent and nonpolitical identity. For more than seven decades, the Union has stood as a pillar of strength for IOB employees, showing that unity, discipline, and principled struggle can achieve lasting victories.

Com. R. Balaji, as the President of NCBE and the General Secretary of AIOBEU, has been steering this organisation with his invaluable experience, progressive outlook, and unwavering commitment to core trade union principles. His dynamic leadership has empowered AIOBEU to march forward with renewed confidence, firmly rooted in its rich legacy while resolutely focused on the challenges and opportunities of the future.

THE SOUTH INDIAN BANK EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION (SIBEA)

The story of SIBEA is rooted in the early days of Indian banking, long before the country gained independence. In the 1920s, banking activity in India was concentrated in regions such as Maharashtra, West Bengal, Karnataka, and Kerala. Within Kerala, the Trichur (now Thrissur) district stood out as a cradle of indigenous financial institutions - banks, chit funds, kuries, and other traditional credit systems that fueled local trade and economic development. It was in this vibrant environment that, in 1929, a group of visionary merchants from Trichur founded The South Indian Bank Ltd. The bank grew steadily in size, reputation, and public confidence, becoming a cornerstone of the regional economy.

In the early decades, bank employees were largely middle class “white collar gentlemen” who viewed trade unionism, public demonstrations, and collective bargaining as incompatible with their social standing. As a result, they worked long hours under increasing pressure while other workers, despite having fewer formal qualifications, secured better wages and conditions through organized unions. Over time, employees realized that individual effort was insufficient to safeguard their rights and dignity. The need for unity, fair wages, improved service conditions, and a share in the bank’s profits became undeniable, laying the foundation for trade union consciousness among South Indian Bank staff.

The first serious attempt to organize came in 1950 at the Trichur office, where employees drafted a by law to form a union. Management quickly responded by questioning the promoters and transferring them out of Trichur, effectively stalling the effort. Yet the idea of collective representation had taken root and could not be extinguished.

The decisive breakthrough arrived in late 1951, in the Madras (now Chennai) branch. Employees there retrieved the earlier Trichur draft, refined it with guidance from experienced trade union leaders, and on the cold night of 12th December 1951 formally established the South Indian Bank Employees' Association (SIBEA). Shri. K. S. Janakiram, a prominent trade union leader of Madras, was elected as the first President. The founding promoters - Com. V. Swaminathan, Com. T. V. Devassy, Com. K. M. Poulouse, Com. P. P. Mathew, Com. P. Kolenadasamy, Com. N. P. Varghese, and Com. Louis Kallurkkaran - provided the courage and vision that gave the association its democratic voice. SIBEA quickly emerged as a disciplined organization committed to protecting employee rights while upholding institutional stability.

Over the following decades, SIBEA matured into a balanced and responsible trade union. A major milestone occurred in 1995 when, under the leadership of General Secretary Com. N. C. Inasu, the association constructed its own office building with an auditorium. The building was inaugurated by Com. L. Balasubramanian, then President of the National Confederation of Bank Employees (NCBE), symbolizing SIBEA's organizational strength, financial stability, and long term vision.

The association continued to adapt to changing times. In 2021, SIBEA launched an interactive mobile application - one of the first such initiatives by a trade union in India - enhancing transparency, communication, and member participation. That same year saw the formation of the SIBEA Women's Council, creating a structured platform for women employees to assume leadership roles and promoting greater inclusivity and gender equity within the organization.

In 2024, SIBEA expanded its footprint with the inauguration of "SIBEA Nexus," a new office space in Cochin. The ceremony was led by General Secretary Com. Anzil K. N. and President Com. Sajo Jose Therattil, and was inaugurated by NCBE President Com. R. Balaji, underscoring SIBEA's firm alignment with the NCBE and its commitment to strengthening trade unionism in the banking sector.

From 2020 onward, SIBEA broadened its activities beyond traditional trade union work. The association began providing an annual diary to members and well wishers. It also organized cultural competitions online, fostering creativity and camaraderie among bank employees across the country. SIBEA's commitment to social responsibility was evident in its charitable initiatives, particularly during the COVID - 19 pandemic when it supported relief efforts for the needy and underprivileged. Through continuous dialogue with bank management, SIBEA helped introduce attractive staff welfare measures that improved morale, work life balance, and organizational stability.

SIBEA remains the sole recognized trade union representing employees of South Indian Bank and is affiliated with the National Confederation of Bank Employees (NCBE), aligning itself with a national platform that upholds democratic trade union values while safeguarding the interests of bank employees in a rapidly changing banking environment.

As SIBEA approaches its 75th anniversary in 2027 - its Platinum Jubilee; the association reflects on a legacy of courage, unity, and evolution. From a suppressed attempt in Trichur to a courageous birth in Madras, through decades of consolidation, technological leadership, and inclusive reforms, SIBEA stands as a strong, modern, and forward looking trade union. Rooted in its legacy and aligned with the NCBE, it continues to be the collective voice, conscience, and strength of South Indian Bank employees, confidently embracing the future.

CONCILIATION PROCEEDINGS HELD ON 4TH NOVEMBER 2025

Another round of conciliation proceedings was held on 4th November 2025 at the office of the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central), New Delhi, involving the United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU), the Indian Banks' Association (IBA), Management Representatives and representatives of the Department of Financial Services (DFS).

During the proceedings, UFBU placed before the Deputy CLC the status of discussions held with IBA on various unresolved demands.

On Performance Linked Incentive (PLI), UFBU reported the discussions with IBA and conveyed its concerns regarding the Government's PLI formula. DFS representatives informed that the Government is considering extending PLI to Scale IV and above officers as per the Joint Note formula in cases where they are not covered under the Government's formula. UFBU reiterated its views seeking reconsideration of the existing framework. The Deputy CLC advised IBA and UFBU to continue discussions and submit concrete suggestions to arrive at an amicable solution for consideration by DFS.

Regarding the introduction of a five-day work week, UFBU expressed serious dissatisfaction over the continued delay despite earlier assurances from the Government. DFS stated that the issue is under active consideration. UFBU conveyed that prolonged delay may compel the revival of protest actions.

On the issue of enhancement of the gratuity ceiling under the Gratuity Act, DFS informed that the proposal is under regular follow-up with the Ministry of Labour. UFBU requested the Deputy CLC to pursue the matter so that the notification is issued at the earliest.

With respect to appointment of Workman Director and Officer Director in Public Sector Banks, it was informed that approval of the recommendations is still pending with the Appointments Committee.

On the recruitment front, IBA and DFS have indicated that around 30,000 recruitments are planned for the current year and approximately 50,000 for the next year. UFBU emphasized the need for IBPS to maintain an adequate list of candidates to ensure timely replacements in cases of non-joining. UFBU also highlighted the acute shortage of sub-staff, which has led to increased engagement of temporary employees.

It was agreed that discussions on other residual issues would continue. The conciliation proceedings were adjourned to 22nd December 2025.

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DISCUSSION WITH SECRETARY, DFS ON LABOUR CODES

Following the Gazette notification dated 21st November 2025 on the implementation of the four Labour Codes replacing 29 existing labour laws, the Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance, held a discussion with the United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU) to understand the concerns of trade unions.

The meeting was held in New Delhi, with Mr. M. Nagaraju, Secretary, DFS, along with senior officials of the department. All UFBU constituents were represented in the meeting.

UFBU conveyed that labour rights in India have evolved through sustained struggles of the working class and trade unions. While acknowledging the need to update labour laws in line with changing requirements, UFBU stressed that any reforms must be undertaken only after meaningful consultation with Central Trade Unions. The need for labour laws to promote regular and permanent employment, rather than contractualisation, was strongly emphasised.

UFBU also pointed out that although the new Labour Code provides for gratuity eligibility after one year of service, the long-pending demand to enhance the gratuity ceiling to 25 lakh remains unaddressed. It was reiterated that simplification of procedures should not result in dilution of existing labour rights.

Taking advantage of the interaction, UFBU also raised several pending issues, including implementation of five-day banking, appointment of Workman and Officer Directors in PSBs, adequate recruitment of Clerical, Substaff and Armed Guards, updation of pension, and bank-borne premium for retirees under the Group Medical Insurance Scheme.

UFBU reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening public sector banks and expressed its willingness to share constructive views and suggestions, proposing continued engagement with DFS on these matters.



Editorial Board

Com. L Chandrasekhar (Chief Editor), General Secretary, NCBE

Members may send their queries, suggestions and feedback to ncbevoice@gmail.com or post to the Chief Editor, NCBE Voice, C/o SBI, LHO Amaravati, 3rd Floor, Annex Building, Gunfoundry, Hyderabad- 500001