

OCTOBER 2025



# NCBE VOICE



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



## PREFACE



Comrades,

It gives us immense pride to place before you the first edition of NCBE Voice - the collective expression of our movement, our struggles, and our vision for the future.

Today, we stand at a decisive phase in the history of the banking industry. On the one hand, digital transformation and policy shifts are reshaping the workplace at an unprecedented pace. On the other, our members continue to carry the weight of service with dedication, often without due recognition. In this changing landscape, the role of our Confederation is not only to defend service conditions but also to ensure that dignity, justice, and welfare remain uncompromised.

Our journey has never been easy. Each achievement we cherish is the outcome of sacrifice, unity, and relentless perseverance. From safeguarding job security to resisting privatization, from securing fair wages to building strong and committed workforce, our NCBE has proved time and again that when we stand together, we stand taller than any challenge.

Our vision goes far beyond individual achievements. We believe that every challenge, big or small, can only be overcome through the power of collective force. In this journey, all affiliates stand together as an integral part of a united movement. History has shown us that whenever we acted collectively in negotiations with management, in policy battles, or in mobilising members, the outcomes have always been positive. Collective strength not only secures victories at the bargaining table but also deepens members' trust, inspiring wider participation and stronger unity.

The launch of initiatives like the NCBE VOICE and official NCBE WhatsApp channel are part of our effort to transform awareness into strength. Knowledge is our weapon, solidarity is our shield, and unity is our everlasting spirit.

As we move ahead, let us remember, our responsibility is not just to protect what we have, but to prepare for what lies ahead. Together, let us keep the flag of NCBE flying high, for the cause of workers, for the cause of public sector banks, and for the cause of justice.

Com. R. Balaji  
President

Com. L. Chandrasekhar  
General Secretary

National Confederation of Bank Employees (NCBE)

### THE LEGACY AND GROWTH OF NCBE A TESTAMENT TO INDEPENDENT TRADE UNIONISM

It is vital for the younger generation of bank employees to understand the rich history of the Bank Employees' Trade Union Movement and the evolution of the National Confederation of Bank Employees (NCBE). It is our collective responsibility to know the facts about the strength, growth, and milestones of our organization, as well as the testing situations it has faced with courage, unity, and unwavering determination. The story of our journey reflects the unyielding spirit of solidarity that has protected the rights and dignity of bank employees through every challenge.

The roots of this movement trace back to the pioneers of **The Imperial Bank of India Indian Staff Association** Bengal Circle, formed in 1920, the **All India Overseas Bank Employees Union** formed in 1937. These organisations laid the foundation for organized trade unionism in the Indian banking industry.

This vision was realized under the leadership of **Com. Debabrata Ghosa**, General Secretary of the Bengal Circle Association. With the support of leaders like **Com. Jyoti Ghosh**, **Com. R.C. Chakravarthy** (Bank of India), **Com. N.C. Maibra** (Hindustan Mercantile Bank Ltd.), and others, unity was forged across banks. A historic meeting was held in Calcutta on **3<sup>rd</sup> November 1945**, presided over by Mr. Syed Nouber Ali (former Speaker, Bengal Legislative Assembly), leading to the creation of a provisional committee to form the **All India Bank Employees' Association (AIBEA)**.

In 1946, **AIBEA** was formally established, with **Com. Roshan Lal Malhotra**, a pioneer of the SBI trade union movement, as its first General Secretary. The pioneers worked with missionary zeal, dedicating themselves both to India's independence and to the upliftment of bank employees.

The unions operating in Calcutta and Madras of the Imperial Bank of India employees came together to form **The Imperial Bank of India Indian Staff Federation** at a conference held in Madras in 1947. The comrades of the Bombay Circle also joined the Federation in 1948. With this, the Imperial Bank of India Indian Staff Federation began functioning collectively across the nation, strengthening its base and unity.

However, over time, due to differences in ideologies, **The Imperial Bank of India Indian Staff Federation** (later AISBISF) seceded from AIBEA. Soon after, the **All India Bank of Baroda Employees' Federation** (1960) and the **All India Overseas Bank Employees' Union** (independent from inception) also chose to function on non-political, independent lines. These organisations shared a common ideology: to keep bank employees' unions free from partisan politics and protect employees from exploitation by political forces.

The AISBISF, representing the overwhelming majority of SBI's workmen staff, firmly upheld independent trade unionism. The nationalisation of 14 major banks in **1969** brought new challenges, making it imperative for likeminded unions to come together.

In **January 1970**, five organisations - AISBISF, All India Bank of Baroda Employees' Federation, All India Indian Overseas Bank Employees' Union, Canara Bank Staff Union, and others met in Bombay and founded the **National Union of Bank Employees (NUBE)**. NUBE was consciously kept free from party politics, yet despite its growing strength, the government ignored it as a party to the Industry Level Tripartite Forum convened by the Government.

The Emergency period (1975-76) further consolidated ABEA's political advantage, side lining NUBE. Meanwhile, in 1973, disenchanted unions had formed the **Indian National Bank Employees Congress (INBEC)**, which later reaffirmed NUBE's ideals of independent trade unionism.

Internal disputes during the Third Bipartite Settlement led to litigations. To safeguard unity, the National Executive Committee met in Delhi on **17<sup>th</sup> June 1979** and resolved to rename INBEC as the **National Confederation of Bank Employees (NCBE)**.

Since then, **NCBE** has emerged as a true, independent, and non-political national centre. From the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> Bipartite Settlements, it has played a pivotal role in securing better wages, service conditions, and social security for employees. Its growth was rapid and nationwide, built on the sacrifices, discipline, and collective spirit of its members.

Over decades, NCBE has not only influenced banking policies but has also safeguarded the dignity of employees by ensuring their voices are heard in government and institutional forums. Its unwavering commitment to collective bargaining, trade union democracy, and social justice distinguishes it as a genuine force in India's labour movement.

**Today, NCBE stands as a beacon of independent trade unionism - born of unity, strengthened by sacrifice, and sustained by an unshakable belief in fairness, solidarity, and the power of collective action.**

The eminent leaders who championed the noble cause of building and upholding the standards of NCBE, while carrying forward its values and vision, deserve to be remembered - for strong roots are always important and unforgettable. As a token of our respect and appreciation, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the leaders listed below.

**N**EVER **C**ADGES **B**UT **E**MERGES

A WINNER ALWAYS...

## NCBE VOICE

<b>Year</b>	<b>President</b>	<b>General Secretary</b>
1973-75	Com. Kali Mukherjee	Com. O. P. Gupta
1975-77	Com. C. R. Chandrasekharan	Com. O. P. Gupta
1977-77	Com. C. L. Rajaratnam	Com. O. P. Gupta
1977-81	Com. O. P. Gupta	Com. C. L. Rajaratnam
1981-89	Com. O. P. Gupta	Com. S. N. Duber
1989-94	Com. O. P. Gupta	Com. P. Lakshmi Narasaiah
1994-99	Com. L. Balasubramanian	Com. P. Lakshmi Narasaiah
1999-04	Com. L. Balasubramanian	Com. Y. Tharaknath
2004-07	Com. L. Balasubramanian	Com. P. K. Patnaik
2007-08	Com. L. Balasubramanian	Com. V. K. Gupta
2008-10	Com. L. Balasubramanian	Com. S. A. Kadri
2010-11	Com. L. Balasubramanian	Com. M. V. Murali
2011-12	Com. Milind Nadkarni	Com. M. V. Murali
2012-16	Com. Vinil Saxena	Com. M. V. Murali
2016-18	Com. Vinil Saxena	Com. Sanjeev K. Bandlish
2018-23	Com. S. C. Balaji	Com. Sanjeev K. Bandlish
2023-24	Com. R. Balaji	Com. Sanjeev K. Bandlish
2024 -	Com. R. Balaji	Com. L. Chandrashekhar

### 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. We will bring forward the histories of every NCBE affiliate, tracing their formation, struggles, and contributions to the confederation in the upcoming NCBE VOICE. The journey of NCBE is unending, yet inspiring.

### ALL INDIA STATE BANK OF INDIA STAFF FEDERATION (AISBISF)

The service conditions of bank employees prior to 1946 speak volumes about the harsh exploitation they endured. Employees had no defined service conditions relating to pay scales, dearness allowance, leave rules, working hours, or job security. There were no fixed working hours, employees could rarely leave the bank before 10 p.m. on Fridays, the weekly closing day, they were compelled to work round the clock until 4 a.m. the following morning, only to return again by 9 a.m. Under such oppressive circumstances, our predecessors realized that a strong Federation was absolutely necessary to safeguard the rights of employees of the Imperial Bank of India.

It was against this backdrop that a few courageous employees of the Imperial Bank of India formed **The Imperial Bank of India Indian Staff Association** in Calcutta on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1920 well before the enactment of the Indian Trade Union Act, 1926. The Association was registered under the Benevolent Societies Act on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1920 with its office at Calcutta. This pioneering initiative not only laid the foundation for the future of bank employees in general and State Bank employees in particular, but also paved the way for the emergence of a mighty Federation. Indeed, it was the very first association of its kind in the Indian banking industry.

The birth of The Imperial Bank of India Indian Staff Association and its historic 46 day indefinite strike from 1<sup>st</sup> August to 15<sup>th</sup> September 1946 was a turning point. This first-ever strike in the banking industry awakened employees across the country to the need for unity and collective struggle in defence of their rights.

Subsequently, three more unions emerged in Bombay, Pune, and Ahmedabad, followed by the establishment of The Imperial Bank of India Indian Staff Association at Madras, which was later registered under the Trade Unions Act as The Imperial Bank of India Indian Staff Union, Madras Circle. Although unions had been formed in the Bengal, Bombay, and Madras Circles, as individual bodies, they struggled to overcome common challenges and appreciated the need for closer coordination. With the Central Government moving towards greater control over banking, and with employees facing common hardships and discrimination, it soon became evident that collective strength under a unified federal structure was essential.

This vision took shape at the All India Conference of Imperial Bank employees held in Madras on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1947, where **The Imperial Bank of India Indian Staff Federation** was born. The Bombay Circle comrades formally joined the Federation in September 1948. Its strength grew further when the three unions operating in the Bombay Circle merged into a single body, the State Bank of India Employees Union, Bombay Circle, in 1951 making the Federation even stronger and more cohesive.

Meanwhile, the Government appointed Sastry Tribunal submitted recommendations on service conditions, but when some were opposed by the unions, the matter was referred to the Bank Award Commission, which gave its report on 28<sup>th</sup> April, 1954. Subsequently the Government ordered with modifications and the Labour Tribunal gave its report on 28<sup>th</sup> August 1954. But its provisions reduced employees' emoluments. In protest, the Imperial Bank of India Indian Staff Federation called for a one-day pen down strike on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1955, followed by a two-day strike on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> January 1956. Despite the preventive detention and arrest of Com. Mohanlal Majumder, then Secretary of the Federation, in the early hours of 5<sup>th</sup> January 1956, the strike was total and complete across the country.

On 1<sup>st</sup> July 1955, the Imperial Bank of India was rechristened as the State Bank of India by a special enactment of Parliament, the *State Bank of India Act, 1955*. Consequently, at its 5<sup>th</sup> Conference held at Calcutta on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> March 1956, the Federation formally adopted its new name: **All India State Bank of India Staff Federation (AISBISF)**.

Since then, AISBISF has played a pioneering role in negotiating successive bipartite settlements. It handled the first and second settlements at the bank level, and later affiliated with the NCBE from the third settlement onwards to strengthen its collective bargaining power. True to its founding principles, it continues to function as a non-political, independent trade union, led entirely by serving employees, and run as an organization *of the employees, by the employees, and for the employees*.

### **ALL INDIA BANK OF BARODA EMPLOYEES' FEDERATION** **(AIBOBEF)**

The service conditions of Bank of Baroda employees in the years preceding the 1950s reflected the difficult realities of a rapidly expanding banking institution where employees had no unified organisation to represent them. Service conditions varied widely across regions and branches, with employees having little say in matters of pay, working hours, promotion, or security of service. In the absence of a collective voice, disparities persisted, and employees felt the urgent need for an all-India body that could effectively articulate their concerns and negotiate fair terms with the management.

It was against this background that a group of visionaries and determined employees came together in Ahmedabad to form a common platform. Their efforts culminated in the founding of the **All India Bank of Baroda Employees' Federation (AIBOBEF)** on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1958, under the inspiring leadership of Late **Com. M. Rajagopal**, who served as the Federation's first General Secretary. His steadfast commitment and unflinching dedication laid the foundation of an independent, non-political trade union devoted solely to the welfare of Bank of Baroda employees.

The emergence of the Federation fulfilled a long-cherished dream of the employees; to have an all-India organisation capable of safeguarding their rights and promoting industrial harmony. Over time, the Federation grew in strength and stature, becoming a respected institution within the Bank and the wider trade union movement.

A major milestone in the Federation's journey came on **9<sup>th</sup> June 1973**, when it was officially recognised by the Bank of Baroda management as the Sole Collective Bargaining Agent for workmen staff, after being certified as the majority union by the Government of India. This recognition marked a turning point, enabling direct and meaningful negotiation on behalf of all workmen. Since then, the Federation has played a pivotal role in shaping the service conditions of Bank of Baroda employees through successive settlements and constructive dialogue.

From its early years, AIBOBEF associated itself with significant developments concerning the banking workforce in India. It participated independently in the Desai Tribunal, asserting the rights of its members, and in December 1966 signed a landmark settlement with the Bank that comprehensively addressed service conditions. Over the decades, the Federation has negotiated and signed 56 settlements, most of them in the last thirty years, demonstrating its sustained strength and credibility as a responsible union.

One of the most remarkable accomplishments in recent history was the historic settlement of 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008, through which more than 4000 temporary employees were made permanent became a milestone in the annals of Bank of Baroda's industrial relations. Following the **amalgamation of e-Vijaya Bank and e-Dena Bank** with Bank of Baroda, the Federation ensured fair and uniform treatment of employees across all three institutions by insisting on common inter-se seniority and facilitating promotional opportunities. At its insistence, posts such as Head Cashier, which were absent in certain merged entities, were duly created, ensuring parity across the bank.

Throughout its history, AIBOBEF has proudly maintained its independent, non-political identity, keeping its decisions free from external influence. Guided solely by the interests of the employees, it has upheld the principles of unity, transparency, and constructive engagement with management. Its affiliation with the **National Confederation of Bank Employees (NCBE)** as an independent, non-political confederation has further strengthened its solidarity.

From its humble beginnings in Ahmedabad in 1958 to its present status as a vibrant, mainstream trade union of Bank of Baroda employees, AIBOBEF has traversed a glorious path of service and struggle. For more than six decades, it has championed the cause of fair service conditions, welfare, and industrial peace in one of India's premier banks.



## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

The National Executive Committee Meeting of NCBE was held on 23rd August 2025 in Pondicherry, bringing together delegates with a shared vision to strengthen the Confederation and address the challenges of the present banking scenario.

The meeting, presided over by Com. R. Balaji, President, highlighted several pressing issues, including the implementation of 5-Day Banking, the need for sub-staff recruitment, and the activation of inoperative accounts by Business Correspondents. He also touched upon other concerns such as Performance Linked Incentive (PLI) and delays affecting various residual issues, assuring the members that these matters are being actively pursued.

In his address, General Secretary Com. L. Chandrasekhar emphasised the unity of NCBE, noting that while members belong to different banks, they function as one union under the NCBE banner. He further proposed the establishment of district committees to strengthen NCBE from the grassroots and called for regular executive committee meetings to ensure effective functioning. A book on Artificial Intelligence (AI) was released to educate members about the potential threats that may emerge in the near future for both banking and trade unions.

The Executive Committee unanimously approved the affiliation of the Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank Employees' Union to NCBE. It was also noted that the Delhi and Uttarakhand State Federations have bifurcated and are now functioning independently, reflecting the growing reach of the organisation. The Committee underscored that increasing membership remains the need of the hour to consolidate NCBE's presence across the banking sector.

The meeting was graced by the presence of Com. Milind Nadkarni, Sr. Vice President; Com. S.C. Balaji, Sr. Vice President; Com. Pankaj Kaushik, Sr. Vice President; Com. Raju Kumar Singh, Vice President; Com. S. Akhil, Vice President; Com. Anzil K.N., Vice President; Com. M. Baskar, Vice President; and Com. Karuna Nidhan, Vice President, and the NCBE executive committee, reflecting the strength and solidarity of the union.

## CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

The Central Committee Meeting of NCBE was held in Pondicherry on 24th August 2025 and served as a platform for several deliberate reforms.

Com. R. Balaji, President, presided over the meeting and delivered an insightful address on issues such as 5-Day Banking, staff shortage, the PLI Scheme, and the urgent need for recruitment.

In his speech, General Secretary Com. L. Chandrasekhar apprised the house of the latest developments, stressing the need for unity and the importance of strong representation under NCBE. He proposed several reforms, which were unanimously approved by the house:

- ◆ Steps to be taken to strengthen NCBE further.

- ◆ Consolidating union activities like May Day, Women's Day, and other programmes under the NCBE banner, ensuring unity and solidarity.
- ◆ Releasing a booklet on Artificial Intelligence (AI) to create awareness among members.
- ◆ Launching an in-house magazine, *NCBE Voice*, to inform, educate, and inspire members nationwide.
- ◆ Facilitating union guest houses through AISBISF and Circle Affiliates in various centres, offering support and convenience to comrades of NCBE-affiliated unions.
- ◆ Introducing Privilege Cards for the entire membership with the NCBE logo, on collective bargaining with vendors.
- ◆ Affiliation given to Karnataka Vikas Bank thereby expanding the number of affiliates under NCBE, thereby enlarging our family and strengthening our base.
- ◆ Forming a Legal Team to assist the members of NCBE and to conduct Workshops on Disciplinary Proceedings.

The General Secretary also highlighted the key issues taken up with the IBA and CLC to fight for just demands, including:

- ◆ **Change of DA Series (Base Year 1960=100 to 2016=100) for Pensioners:** To simplify the CPI conversion process and ensure accurate Dearness Relief fixation for pensioners.
- ◆ **Classification of SEZ/EPZ Branches for Allowance:** To secure Project Area Compensatory Allowance for employees in high-cost SEZ/EPZ areas without ambiguity.
- ◆ **Performance Linked Incentive:** NCBE is demanding for uniform PLI for all the employees as agreed in the Bipartite Settlements.
- ◆ **Enhancement of Gratuity Ceiling:** NCBE demands the Govt of India to approve the enhancement of Gratuity Ceiling to 25 Lakh on par with Central Government employees.
- ◆ **Opposition to Apprentices in Banks:** To prevent exploitation of youth through low stipends and safeguard permanent employment in public sector banks.
- ◆ **5 Day Banking:** NCBE urges for the implementation of 5 Day Banking to safeguard employees' work - life balance.
- ◆ **Updation of Pension:** NCBE demands for the implementation of updation of the Pension.

These issues reinforced the core message of the meeting that NCBE's leadership, backed by the commitment of its affiliates, can translate the collective will of employees into tangible results.

Com. V Sridharan, AISBISF unanimously co-opted as the Vice President of NCBE. The presence of senior office-bearers and dignitaries gave further weight to the deliberations, ensuring that every decision carried the authority and vision of experienced leadership.

The meeting was attended by Com. Pankaj Kaushik, Sr. Vice President; Com. Raju Kumar Singh, Sr. Vice President; Com. S. Akhil, Vice President; Com. Anzil K.N., Vice President; Com. M. Baskar, Vice President; Com. Karuna Nidhan, Vice President; and Com. V. Sridharan, Vice President, all of whom addressed the gathering along with other the Central Committee Members of NCBE.

The meeting concluded on a note of optimism and determination and NCBE will continue to lead, inspire, and protect the interests of bank employees across the country.



## TRADE UNION STRATEGIES FOR THE DIGITAL FINANCE ERA

The financial sector is undergoing a profound transformation. What was once a sector defined by human judgment, trust, and long built relationships is now being reshaped by algorithms, machine learning models, and intelligent systems that make decisions at unprecedented speed. As Artificial Intelligence begins to define the new digital finance era, a crucial question emerges: **Who shapes this technology, who benefits from it, and who bears its risks?**

This is the essence of our challenge: **Shaping AI while defending the dignity, security, and rights of labour.**

### AI at the Core of Financial Operations

The shift is not happening in the distant future - it is unfolding right now. In October 2025, the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and Razorpay initiated a pilot project with Open AI to enable AI-led payments using ChatGPT, allowing customers to make UPI transactions through simple voice or text commands. Parallely, the Reserve Bank of India launched AI-based UPI HELP to manage customer queries and disputes through automated intelligence tools.

These developments confirm that AI is entering the very heart of financial operations - payments, credit, customer service, risk management, and compliance.

### The Changing Nature of Work

With AI evolving rapidly, several core banking tasks traditionally performed by skilled staff are being automated:

- ◆ Loan appraisal and documentation
- ◆ Fraud detection
- ◆ Video-based customer onboarding
- ◆ Transaction monitoring
- ◆ Call-centre and helpdesk functions

AI systems can read documents, analyse sentiment, detect anomalies, and generate personalized communication. These are precisely the domains where thousands of employees currently work. AI is not arriving - it has already arrived. The pressing question now is whether it will complement human labour or replace it, whether it will democratize opportunities or consolidate power.

### Regulation and the Voice of Labour

As AI adoption accelerates, it creates a valuable opportunity for workers and their representatives to contribute actively to the conversation. Ethical AI naturally includes labour ethics, especially when algorithms can influence lending decisions or reshape job roles. Trade unions can play a constructive part in AI governance frameworks by helping shape policies on:

- ◆ **Bias and Discrimination:** If AI is trained on biased data, it can deny loans unfairly or label certain customer segments as 'risky' purely due to historical patterns.

- ◆ **Job Displacement:** Efficiency-driven automation without safeguards threatens meaningful employment.
- ◆ **Deskilling of Labour:** Workers risk becoming passive operators of opaque systems they neither design nor control.
- ◆ **Surveillance and Control:** AI tools may monitor performance, behaviour, and even emotional tone, compromising dignity.
- ◆ **Data Privacy and Ownership:** Massive datasets of customers and employees raise concerns about ownership, security, and misuse.

These concerns strike at the core of workers' rights and human dignity.

### The Global Warning

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has warned that more than 10% of banking and insurance jobs could be displaced by automation by 2030. The guiding principle must be clear: **Technology for people, not people for Technology.**

### A Defining Moment for Trade Unions

AI in digital finance is inevitable, but its future direction is not pre-written. Today, AI can execute a UPI payment; tomorrow it may manage lending, credit appraisal, or workforce deployment. Trade unions must therefore reimagine their strategies for this era.

No digital transformation in the financial sector should proceed without a **human impact assessment**. Unions cannot reject technology outright, nor accept it unconditionally. The stance must be: **“Yes to AI - but with fairness, accountability, and social dialogue.”**

**If unions remain silent, others will write the rules and we will live by them.**

The challenge before us is to ensure that the digital finance era enhances human value, protects livelihoods, and upholds dignity at work. The future of labour in the age of AI must not be left to algorithms alone; it must be shaped collectively, responsibly, and ethically.

### **Editorial Board**

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

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