



STATE BANK OF HYDERABAD STAFF ASSOCIATION

(Regd. No. 269)

Central Office, Gunfoundry, Hyderabad – 500 001

Phone: 040-66661941, 23387696, 23387-396,300,262, 217

e. mail. sbhsahyd@gmail.com website – www.sbhsa.org

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TO

ALL THE MEMBERS:

Dear Comrades,

We reproduce hereunder the CIRCULAR LETTER NO: 26/253/2013/5, dated: 22nd January, 2013, issued by our National Organization – AIBEA, for your information.

With Greetings,

Yours Comradely,

(JAGDISH M BHAVTHANKAR)
GENERAL SECRETARY

TEXT OF AIBEA CIRCULAR:

Dear Comrades,

March on to 2 Days' National General Strike on 20th and 21st Feb. 2013

We have already issued the call for joining the Nationwide General Strike on 20th and 21st February, 2013 in support of the call given jointly by all the Central Trade Unions in our country against the anti-people, anti-worker policies of the Government. We are sure that all our units are taking steps to popularise the call and implement the same successfully. UFBU is meeting on 31-1-2013 where the call of the Central Trade unions will be discussed for taking a collective decision about participation in the strike.

In the meantime, as decided in our Central Committee meeting, all-out steps should be taken to reach our out to our members about the significance of the strike and also campaign amongst the banking public about the reason for our strike.

We furnish herein the leaflet which should be got printed in English and regional languages to extensively campaign amongst the people at large. In our Hyderabad CC meeting, it was decided that we must reach atleast 50 lacs customers by distributing the leaflets, holding meetings, etc.

Comrades, this strike call is very important. We must take special efforts to make it an unprecedented success.

With greetings,

Yours Comradely,

C.H.VENKATACHALAM
GENERAL SECRETARY

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FORWARD TO ALL INDIA GENERAL STRIKE ON 20-21 FEBRUARY, 2013

HIT OUT THOSE WHO HAVE HIT THE PEOPLE

A grave crisis has set in affecting millions of people in the country. It is grim all around, politically and economically. The Government of the day has lost all its credibility. Struck by charges of corruption repeatedly, it is almost non-functional. The colossal failure of the political system to provide the right of life to the people of the country is shameful. The sky high inflation of food prices and stagnation of the economy are the characteristics of the crisis that has engulfed the nation. It has no strategy to face the challenge. It seeks to throw all the burden of the crisis on the common people.

All are affected. The entire nation has fallen victim to the neo liberal economic policy. The working people, the unorganised labour, contract casual and informal workers in urban and rural areas are the worst hit. Jobs are disappearing. The real purchasing power of the working masses is impacted. The working condition is rudely affected. Minimum wage is not paid. Statutory benefits are withdrawn. No old age pension, no maternity benefits. Labour laws are all violated. The working hours are abnormally lengthened. Wages are below the minimum. Trade unionism is not being allowed. Working class protest is suppressed. The domestic and foreign corporate in collusion with the government have let loose merciless attack on the working people. Situation has become unbearable.

The largest number of poor people live in India. According to the World Hunger Index, India is one of the most affected countries. According to a worldwide survey, health parameters in India are one of the lowest. In a recent judgement, the Supreme Court has pointed to a wide prevalence of bonded labour in India. Even the Labour Ministry had to admit that in a large number of States Minimum Wage Act is widely violated. Over years labour productivity has increased, even during crisis profit of the corporates have jumped, but the real producers of wealth had not received the price of their labour. Sexual atrocities on young working women are pronounced. More than 63 years of India's freedom and more than 53 years of planning has bypassed all the human fundamentals.

While industry is deeply affected, agriculture also is in crisis. While industrial production has gone down, agriculture output is unstable. Service sector is also affected. While retrenchment and job loss is taking place in industrial sector, in agriculture, farmers are denied of the bank credit, power supply, distress sale of harvest has become rampant. Large scale suicides of the peasants are taking place. The agricultural workers do not get job throughout the year and their wage are abysmally low.

Investment in economy has dipped over years, GDP has declined. The story of economic growth has exploded. The planning process seems to have benefited the rich, denied the elementary right of living to overwhelming majority of the people.

The Government has no policy to curb the price and contain the recession of the economy, mitigate poverty and job loss. In fact, the present crisis has baffled the Government as if it has no role to play. It has become non-functional. It is only inviting foreign capital, doling out concessions, rolling out red carpet as if FDI can step up the economic growth benefiting the common people.

While it is necessary to expand government investment, stimulate market, create job, build up huge infrastructure as an effective measure to counter the slowdown of economy, it is reining expenditure, curtailing plan and non-plan budget, abolishing vacancies in the public

sector and government. Even elementary social schemes like NREGA, health and education schemes are all affected. In fact, the government is pruning expenditure in the vital social sectors in the name of fiscal consolidation.

While private capital has a role to play in the economic development of the country, in a crisis as we face today the vital is government expenditure and investment. It is also necessary to spend more to fight illiteracy, hunger, poverty, joblessness, pauperisation of the peasantry and ruination of the agricultural labour force. If the government moves in this direction, it will give relief to the people.

Turning its back to the national interest, the government is initiating steps one after another which is inflaming inflation and accentuating economic stagnation. The increase in the diesel price is the point in question. Again there is a talk of further increase of diesel price. Cap on LPG shall cause disaster to the middleclass families. The increase in railway fare and freight is imminent. Power tariff is on the rise. The coal price is also going to be enhanced. The government is recklessly increasing the price of all the commodities that is so urgently necessary for daily life. Retail market has been opened up to world multinationals like Wal-Mart which will seriously endanger the livelihood of the small shopkeepers and employees and street vendors who are crores in number.

While subsidised universal rationing system has been virtually abandoned, there is a talk of cash transfer to the poor people. The scheme may prove to be disastrous as it has been confirmed by experience in Jharkhand. The nationalised banking system and the insurance sectors which have insulated India from the convulsion of the international money market are sought to be undermined by induction of private capital. The disinvestment of the profit making public sector is deeply corroding into the vitals of the Indian economy. There is a talk of making labour laws more flexible to make hire and fire easy for the employers.

While neo-liberal economic policy has made the lives of the people miserable over years, the recent stagnation of the economic development and sky high inflation has further caused significant human distress in the country.

It is not the organized workers in the industrial sector who are grossly affected; it is the contract workers, informal and casual labour which is the worst victim. While the industrial workers who are organised are sure to be denied of the legitimate rights, increase in bonus and wages, the unorganized sector will be more rudely affected through job loss, wage cut, and non-payment of minimum wage and denial of statutory dues.

The women who are joining the labour force in large numbers are more and more harassed by the management and minimum primacy in the service condition is denied and wage discrimination is widely practised. The huge army of Anganwadi works, health workers, mid-day meal workers and domestic works are all women. They are subjected to social atrocity, denial of reasonable wage. This is again another example of government policy which leads to disempowerment of working women.

Banking sector is no exception. Attempts are on to reduce and dilute the Government's equity capital in Public Sector Banks. Attempts are equally on to boost private capital in the equity of our PSBs. For public sector banks, the Government talks of mergers and consolidation to shrink the scope of social banking. But in the same breath, the Government wants to encourage and expand private sector banking. New Licenses are sought to be given to industrial houses to start their own private Banks. This is the double standard of the Government. Banking Laws are amended to convert bad loans of corporate houses as investments in the equity capital of the very same defaulters. Huge loans are being written off to favour the rich borrowers. Rural branches are sought to be closed down and rural banking is being given to private outsourced Business Correspondents. Priority sector loan targets are not being reached by many Banks. Corporate loans are increasing. Banks are appearing to drift from the goals and objectives of bank nationalisation. In one word, the clock is sought to be reversed.

The historic unity of the trade unions, all recognised eleven trade unions coming together on the same platform having 10 point charter has opened up new possibility of developing resistance against the attack unleashed by Government and the corporates. For the last three years, the united trade union movement has made a significant advance, having one day historic strike on 28th February in 2012, there have been rail rook, jail bharo, even a massive march to Parliament. While the Prime Minister talks to the tax evaders, the delinquent industrialists who have never cared to follow the principles of industrial democracy and indulging in reckless violation of labour laws, does not have the elementary courtesy of talking to the trade union representatives on their demands knowing fully well that no country in the world can advance and make economic progress if the working masses remain discontented and bypassed.

Therefore, in a situation when the Government mounts attack on the people, when distress of the working masses gravely deepens, when the government instead of taking a realistic policy regime to protect the people who are in the backyard of the economy, even when the problems of the working people remain unaddressed, it is incumbent for us to stimulate the agitation, taking it to a higher level and as such a call for **two-day strike for first time in the history of India has been given on 20th and 21st of February, 2013** on the eve of the presentation of the Union Budget with a slogan:

"Hit out those who have hit the people". Mount counter-offensive to stall the atrocity of the Government.

We appeal to all, all bank employees of our country and the entire working masses to unitedly make the call of a two-day general strike a success. It is only militant mass action that can bring the government to sense. It is heartening to note that it is not the eleven trade unions alone but almost all the unaffiliated unions, federations and associations have supported the call of the two-day general strike.

It is the right moment to make a mass intervention. Indignation against the government is brewing. The spontaneous outburst of anger is taking place everywhere. The people boiling in the fire of inflation must be brought to the street to paralyse the government and all its apparatus to demonstrate the strength of the masses opposed to the government policies.

The country must come to a halt on 20th and 21st of February, 2013. Working class people must withdraw from all the work places. Banking industry should come to a grinding halt. The Government must be paralysed. That is the only way to resist the aggression of the Government and win the demands for the benefit of the people. The strength of unity that provides an opportunity must be utilised to convert the crisis into a new wave of resistance.

MARCH ON TO STRUGGLE
MARCH ON WITH UNITY



ALL INDIA BANK EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION