

UNITED FORUM OF BANK UNIONS

(AIBEA-AIBOC-NCBE-AIBOA-BEFI-INBEF-INBOC-NOBW-NOBO)

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K.K.NAIR
Chairman

M. V. MURALI
Convenor

UFBU/RBI/2013/19

Date: 3RD October 2013

The Governor,
Reserve Bank of India,
Central Office Building,
MUMBAI.

Dear Sir,

ADOPTION OF UNIFORM HOLIDAYS CALENDER – GRID BASED CHEQUE TRUNCATION SYSTEM

We have to inform that the constituent unions/ Associations of United Forum of Bank Unions are repeatedly drawing the attention of Government, Reserve Bank of India and Indian Bank's Association on the issuance of unilateral instructions to the banks curtailing the festival holidays granted through notification by the State Governments under N.I. Act, 1881 in the guise of grid based cheque truncation system.

02. India, being a culturally diverse and fervent society, celebrates various religious festivals. States and regions have local festivals depending on prevalent religious and linguistic demographics. The annual holidays for banks are widely observed by choice on different days in different states according to local custom. The curtailment of festival holidays as above frustrates the employees concerned as they were not able to perform their religious rituals/puja as per their community systems.

03. The object of introduction of cheque truncation system is mainly to contain the delay and also to wean the payments system from paper but certainly not for curtailing the weekly-offs and festival holidays of the employees. We do agree that the services of the employees can be requisitioned on a holiday in exigency of services on special and unforeseen circumstances, but not on regular basis. Further, we do not find any reason in forcing the employees to work even on public holidays despite the availability of "Blockage" and "Holiday Marking" functions in the Grid-based Cheque Truncation System to handle different State Holidays for a value-date.

04. We refer to your Notification No.RBI/2013-14/199 DPSS.CO.CHD. No./458/04.07.05/2013-14 dated 23rd August 2013, wherein directions have been issued to the Heads of all Banks that the CTS Centres in New Delhi, Chennai and Mumbai will adopt RTGS holidays as uniform holidays for the respective grid. This needs to be desisted as the list of RTGS holidays does not cover even a single festival of the majority community of the Country.

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05. Further, the RBI has directed that CTS operations will be closed on such days when **all** the participating states in the grid are observing holidays, even though RTGS is working on such days. It is unfortunate that there is no festival on which the entire country uniformly observes holiday more particularly in case of Hindu festivals. Herein, it will not be out of place to mention that majority of the States in the country has declared holidays on varied days for Pooja and Diwali Festivals and majority of the employees are denied of their festival holidays due to non-declaration of holiday on the material day in one or a few of the states in a particular grid hurting the religious sentiments of majority of employees. Hence, we request for amendment of instructions with regard to closure of CTS operations on such days even when one of the participating states in the grid is observing holiday or else exempt that particular state from participation, even though RTGS is working on such days.

06. We are not against the initiatives for effective and quicker customer service through modification of banking practice in tune with the changing times but certainly not at the cost of statutory rights of the employees. The arbitrary withdrawal of the entitled public holidays of bank employees without giving any cognizance to the religious sentiments of the employees would demoralise the workforce. It also defies the purpose of declaring holiday under N.I. Act making it a mockery.

07. In the circumstances, we once again urge upon you to arrange for immediate amendment of the above instructions. We also request you to arrange for discussions with us to consider alternative proposals to arrive at an amicable solution and ensure a conducive and relaxed working environment to the employees working in CTS centres. Pending review of the system, we request you to issue suitable instructions so as to ensure that the employees can avail the ensuing Dusserah and Diwali holidays, wherever declared under N.I. Act.

Please acknowledge receipt of this communication and advise us the developments in this regard.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,

(M. V. MURALI)
CONVENOR