

Cooperative Bank employees planning to protest against RBI

Demonetisation will take a toll on the Public Distribution System, says P Balakrishnan, general secretary, All India cooperative bank employee's federation

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Around one lakh employees representing a majority of the cooperative banks across the country are expected to protest against the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) decision restricting majority of the cooperative banks from dealing with the Rs 500 and Rs 1000 notes which has been demonetised last week. The employees might look at various options including strike to protest, according to union leaders.

Total deposits of all the cooperative banks in the country would be around Rs 10 lakh crore, said P Balakrishnan, general secretary, All India Co-operative Bank Employees Federation.

A meeting of the Federation held in Vijayawada has decided to conduct protests in bank premises across the country, alleging that the operations has already came to a standstill and it is going to affect the distribution of essential commodities through Public Distribution System (PDS) since they have run out of cash.

These institutions, which are responsible to procure commodities for PDS, said that they did not receive any money from the Central Co-

operative and they are not able to meet their customer requirements also. Almost 60% of the population depends on the PDS for supply of essential commodities and this is expected to hit because of the lack of notes for transaction, he added.

Of all cooperative banks, only urban cooperative banks and the state cooperative banks has been allowed to exchange the old Rs 500 and Rs 1000 notes while others including the industrial and primary agricultural cooperative Banks has been ignored when it comes to the demonetisation move, alleged Balakrishnan.

"This is murder of all the cooperative banks by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) itself. Against this action of RBI, the cooperative bank employees will go for a demonstration on November 18 in the bank premises. Other methods of agitation will follow," he said.

The total deposits of all the cooperative banks is more than Rs 10 lakh crore, including Central Cooperative Banks which has a deposit of over Rs 3.5 lakh crore and Urban Cooperative Banks (Rs 4 lakh crore), primary cooperative and agricultural bank etc.

In Tamil Nadu, the cooperative Banks has been providing more than Rs 2.60 lakh crore by way of advances. There are around 16,000 employees including the primary agricultural cooperative banks in the State, he added.