

Rejoinder

News Item namely 'গ্রামীণ ব্যাঙ্কের কোমড় ভাঙছে সরকার' published in local news paper namely Syandan Patrika on 14.07.2021.

State Project Director, Samagra Shiksha, Tripura has noticed the above referred news items and in this regards, following facts are furnished below:

The Department of Expenditure, Government of India on 23rd March, 2021 had issued a revised procedure for release of funds to States for the Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) for monitoring the utilization of the funds released with the view to have more effective cash management, encourage cashless transactions thereby enhancing efficiency in the public expenditure management **w.e.f 1st July, 2021(Ref. no.- F.No.1(13)PFMS/FCD/2020 dated 23rd march, 2021)**. Same was followed by the instruction issued from the Ministry of Education, Gol, vide letter no. D.O. No. 4-4/2021-IS.2 dated **24th May, 2021**.

State Government will have to designate a Single Nodal Agency (SNA) which will open a Single Nodal Account along with zero balance subsidiary accounts down the ladder for each CSS at the State level in a Scheduled Commercial Bank having robust IT systems and are authorized to conduct government business by the State Government.

To ensure cashless transactions, SNA and Implementing Agencies(IAs) will have to be mapped in PFMS and mandatorily use the **Expenditure, Advance and Transfer (EAT) module** of PFMS or integrate their systems with the PFMS which will be updated by each IA at least once every day.

It was also mentioned in the Office Memorandum(OM) of Gol that prior to opening of zero balance subsidiary bank accounts, the Implementing Agencies (IAs) at all levels shall return the entire unspent amounts lying in their respective existing bank accounts to the SNA and subsequently utilise the same after complete implementation of the new system as per the guideline.

In this new system, all the Schools and other allied units will be provided with PFMS access where they will have fund transfer options such as PPA, DSC, e-PA for making any transactions in a completely cashless method without any need to physically visit the Bank Branches at any point of time even to update the bank pass book or taking statements of the same, discontinuing the mundane/ conventional method of physically pay a visit at branch premise with office orders for day to day necessary transactions.

As per the guidelines of the said OM, the Bank (with a robust technology) will develop and provide a **Dashboard** which will help to monitor, reconcile and keep track of transactions in real time basis at various levels down the line. Opening all the zero balance account in a

single bank was required to provide the aforementioned facility.

The State Project Director (SPD), Samagra Shiksha had invited all leading Banks in the state including TGB for presentation of SNA. At first there was no response from TGB, SBI and PNB. Secretary, School Education personally spoke to the Banks and requested them to give a presentation in front of SPD, Samagra Shiksha. Hence, it was ensured that all banks got an opportunity to pitch for SNA Account.

In appraisal of the requests received from the 7(seven) leading banks of the states (such as State Bank of India, Tripura Gramin Bank, Punjab National Bank, Canara Bank, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank and Axis Bank), till date SNA accounts have been opened by this Department in Punjab National Bank and Canara Bank for Mid-Day Meal and Samagra Shiksha Scheme respectively giving special emphasis on robust IT system of concerned banks. For rest of the CSS schemes, selection process is underway.

Before finalising the bank to carry out the scheme all interested banks were requested to give a presentation separately where Tripura Gramin Bank representatives were unable to demonstrate any facilities highlighted above and also requested for unspecified time period to develop such system. Since, the deadline given by MOE for SNA opening was 1st July,2021, their request could not be entertained.

Camps have been organized for schools at block levels in successive dates to collect all the forms and the same were scrutinized by the bank officials during the camp so that the account opening process can take place in a hassle free manner.

No employees will be compelled to maintain their SALARY ACCOUNT in the same bank where SNA Account and zero balance accounts are maintained. All employees are independent to choose any bank of their choice to maintain their salary accounts.

From the above, it is clear that the only intention of the Department is to comply the instructions received from Government of India and to monitor the utilization of the funds released with the view to have more effective cash management, encourage cashless transactions. Thus the allegations contained in referred news items are not based on facts,
