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Bank unions decide to join national strike on September 2

By PTI | Updated: Aug 18, 2016, 04:52 PM IST

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VADODARA: Nearly 5 lakh [bank union workers](#) and officers are set to join the strike called by trade unions on September 2 to protest against what they call anti-people policies of the Modi government and [labour reforms](#).

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"There have been increasing attacks in the banking industry and the government has been taking steps which are anti-people. It's attempting to privatise state-run banks and merge associate banks with State Bank of India. It is also looting the public money in the name of bad loans," [All-India Bank Employees Association \(AIBEA\)](#) General Secretary [C H Venkatchalam](#) said here today.

"To protest against all these, we will be joining the national strike called by other labour unions on September 2."

On March 30, all central trade unions such as [INTUC](#), [AITUC](#), [HMS](#), [CITU](#), [AIUTUC](#), [TUCC](#), [SEWA](#), [AICCTU](#), [UTUC](#) and [LPF](#) had given a one-day national general strike call on September 2 to protest against the Modi government's "unilateral labour reforms and anti-worker policies".

The RSS-backed [Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh \(BMS\)](#) has, however, decided to keep away.

Last year too, the unions had gone on strike on September 2 to oppose the amendments in labour laws by the Centre as well as states, saying their 12-point charter of demands had not been met.

The unions have been opposing certain proposed labour law amendments that allow hire and fire, make it tougher to form labour unions and dilute existing social security available to workers at different fora.

Under the proposed Industrial Relations Code Bill 2015, companies with up to 300 headcount need not get government nod for retrenchment, lay off and closure. The government is also working on a Small Factories Bill that seeks to exempt units with under 40 workers from 14 labour laws.

These 10 unions claim a combined membership of 15 crore workers in public and private sector enterprises, including banks and insurance companies.

On the massive rise in bad loans, which have touched the Rs 13 trillion mark, he alleged that instead of taking tough measures to book culprits and recover the money, more and more concessions are being given to defaulters. He did not elaborate.

He went on to say that "in the name of cleaning the bank balancesheets, these bad loans are being taken out of public glare so that they could be silently written off".

Making the point that while regional rural banks are being privatised and a central law has already been passed, he said primary agricultural co-operative societies are under the threat of closure and urban co-operative banks face delicensing.

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