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Employment Prohibition of Contract Labour for Core Activities

The Occupational Safety, Health, and Working Conditions (OSH) Code 2020, defines the 'core activities' of establishments and prohibits principal employers from engaging contract labour in such core activities. However, the code also clarifies certain circumstances where such engagement of contract labour may be allowed. The concept of core activity and the prohibition on the engagement of contract labour in such activities with limited exceptions is not new to the labour law domain. By way of the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) (Amendment) Act, 2003, Andhra Pradesh had provided a similar condition in the Contract Labour Act, 1970 as applicable to the state.

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Core Activity Under OSH Code: Under the OSH Code, core activities shall mean "any activity for which the establishment is set up and includes any activity which is essential or necessary to such activity". Furthermore, the code lists the below activities as not considered to be an essential or a necessary activity if the establishment is not set up for such activity:

- Sanitation work
- Watch and ward services including security services
- Canteen and catering services
- Loading and unloading operations
- Running of hospitals, educational and training institutions, guest houses and clubs which are in nature support services of an establishment
- Courier services which are in nature of support services
- Civil and other constructional work
- Gardening and maintenance of lawns
- Housekeeping and laundry services which are in nature of support services
- Transport services including ambulance services
- Any activity of intermittent nature even if that constitutes a core activity of an establishment

Some Exceptions Under OSH Code: The OSH Code provides that the principal employer may engage contract labour through a contractor in any core activity in the following situations, where:

- The normal functioning of the establishment is such that the activity is ordinarily done through a contractor.
- The activities are such that they do not require full-time workers for the major portion of the working hours in a day or longer periods, as the case may be.

- Any sudden increase in the volume of work in the core activity which needs to be accomplished in a specified time.

To ensure compliance, establishments need to identify their core activities as defined under the OSH Code and then can they avail the benefit of the exceptions to deploy contract labour for core activities. Establishments should validate the primary nature of the work of the contractor and understand the engagement of deployment provisions in the vendor agreement. If the contract is designed on a delivery model, then the agreement ends at the completion of the deliverables. If the contract is based on an hourly model, then it has to be justifiable as specified in the above exceptions. Furthermore, one of the employment conditions is to issue an appointment letter in the prescribed format with mandatory fields to every employee of an establishment.

In view of this, a company or a contractor that hires employees to work only in the establishment may have to specify the employment conditions in the employment agreement. The employees who are hired to work in the company or contractor's establishment cannot be deployed at the client location, as such workers shall not be considered as 'Contract Labour'. Therefore, while issuing an employment agreement, the employment terms and conditions should specify whether the employee is required to work in any other locations or the company's client locations. Hence, establishments engaging contractors in their core business function exposes them to the risk of non-compliance under the new Codes.

Key Decisions Announced at the 185th Meeting Of ESIC

The 185th meeting of the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) held at Rishikesh in Uttarakhand saw a slew of important decisions announced by Union Minister for Labour and Employment, Shri Bhupender Yadav.

- **Auto-referral to empanelled private hospitals will be provided when specialisation is not available in ESIC hospital:** During the meeting, it was also decided that wherever in-house facilities are not available in ESIC hospitals, patients would be referred to empanelled private medical service providers and wherever any ESI facility is at a distance of more than 10 km from the IP, patients can directly approach the empanelled hospitals for treatment.

- **Two new 100 bedded ESIC hospitals to come up in Karnataka, seven new dispensaries for Kerala:** Shri Yadav announced the approval of 5-acre land parcels for acquisition to set up new 100 bedded ESIC hospitals at Haroholli and Narsapur in Karnataka, seven new ESIC dispensaries for Kerala among other things.

- **Atal Beemit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana' extended up to June 2022:** Stating that the government under the guidance and direction of Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi is focused and committed towards targeted delivery of services by ensuring last-mile deliveries promptly, the Minister further announced that the 'Atal Beemit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana' is now extended up to 30th June 2022. This is a scheme for unemployment allowance paid at 50% of wages for 3 months to those insured persons who lose their jobs for any reason

- **One 30 bedded hospital at Shahjehanpur in UP approved:** One 30 bedded hospital was also approved for Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh and a dedicated earmarked fund was also accorded approval to provide for long term liabilities for the ESIC COVID relief scheme.

It was also decided that the ESIC Dental College working from temporary structures at Rohini, in Delhi would be shifted to the new building at the ESIC Hospital Basai Dara Pur campus.

- **Each district across the nation would come under the coverage of ESIC:** Recently Union Minister for Labour and Employment, Sh. Bhupender Yadav inspected the proposed 300-bed ESIC hospital in Haridwar. On the occasion, the Minister said that during the pandemic ESIC has provided relief to the people by throwing open its facilities for the general public and by announcing the COVID-19 relief scheme, where the dependents of the Insured Person are given 90% of the average wages of the deceased worker for the lifetime. He further added that ESIC has already sanctioned Rs. 297 Crore for the proposed 300-bed hospital in Haridwar, apart from the two hospitals sanctioned in Dehradun and Kashipur. He expressed hope that land for the hospitals at Dehradun and Kashipur would soon be made available. The union minister also said that the proposals for ESIC hospitals at Kotdwar and Khateema would be sympathetically viewed. He also added that all the support would be provided to the Uttarakhand government to hire medical professionals for the smooth functioning of the ESIC hospital at Rudrapur. Sh. Rameswar Teli, Minister of State for Labour & Employment and Petroleum & Natural Gas said that the 300-bed ESIC hospital will be spread in over 5 acres, it will have state of the art facilities for 50 specialities such as nephrology and cardiology. The Minister said that ESIC is currently serving more than 3 crore insured people and over 13 crore dependents through them. ESIC has its presence in 577 districts across the nation. The Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Sh. Pushkar Singh Dhami promised to resolve the land allotment for ESIC hospitals at Dehradun and Kashipur.

Source: Press Information Bureau

Implementing Social Security Code, A Priority, Says Minister

Implementing the Code on Social Security, 2020 and bringing the maximum number of workers under the ambit of social security schemes were the top priorities of the government, according to Labour and Employment Minister Bhupender Yadav. The minister who was inducted into the Cabinet during the expansion in July said the task ahead for him and the Ministry would be to ensure that the benefits of the Code on Social Security "reach the poor and downtrodden". Among the features of the social security code is the expansion of benefits under the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) to gig and platform workers. "The need of the hour is that a large number of workers must come under the ambit of social security schemes," Mr Yadav said.

The social security code, which along with codes on wages, industrial relations and occupational safety were passed in 2019 and 2020, is yet to be implemented as the rules framed under the Act have not been notified. Asked when the four labour codes would be implemented, Mr Yadav declined to comment on a timeline. According to Labour Ministry sources, the rules framed under the four codes are ready to be notified and States are in the process of notifying their own rules for the same. Earlier in the year, Labour and Employment Secretary Apurva Chandra had said the rules would be ready before April 1. Officials have since then not commented on when the rules would be notified. A Ministry source said once notified, the rules would take some time to be executed and employers would likely be given three months to comply with the provisions.

Source: The Hindu

Delhi High Court Extends Deadline till November 30 to Seed Aadhaar With UAN

The Delhi High Court has extended till November 30 the deadline for the seeding of the Aadhaar number along with the Universal Account Number (UAN) and its verification. Justice Prathiba M Singh said that till then, the employers shall be permitted to deposit the provident funds in respect of employees for whom seeding has not taken place and no coercive measures shall be taken against them. "Until and unless the issue of whether mandatory seeding is legally valid or not is determined, as per Aadhaar judgement, there cannot be any exclusion of benefits to employees under the Act, due to failure to authenticate or verify with Aadhaar," the judge said in her order dated September 17.

"Insofar as those persons for whom the Aadhaar number seeding is yet to take place are concerned, the date for completing the seeding and verification shall stand extended till November 30, 2021. "In the meantime, employers shall be permitted to deposit the provident funds in respect of employees for whom seeding has not taken place and no coercive measures shall be taken against them for non-seeding of Aadhaar numbers with UANs," the order said.

The court, which was dealing with a petition by the Association of Industries and Institutions, clarified that the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) would appoint a Grievance Redressal Officer who can be contacted by the petitioner's members or any other employer, to ensure that the deposits are not delayed and are made on time. The court said that for employees whose Aadhaar numbers have already been provided to the EPFO, the provident fund shall be permitted to be deposited by the employers without awaiting verification from the Unique Identification Authority of India while the process of verification goes on.

It also ordered that no coercive measures shall be taken against the employers for the time being for belated payments on account of the technical difficulties from June 1 to 15. The petitioner is an association of various entities and persons stated to be owning and running industrial/commercial establishments, factories, institutions, etc. It moved the court, against an EPFO circular, issued on June 1, which made the seeding of Aadhaar number along with the UAN, generated under the Employees Provident Fund & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, mandatory. As per a central government circular issued on June 15, the deadline for compliance was set as September 1.

The petitioner contended that enormous prejudice was being caused to the employers due to the EFPO's order. It said that in certain instances, there was a mismatch between the Aadhaar database and the EPFO database, and the employers were being forced to not employ those workmen/employees, who do not have proper Aadhaar cards. The Association also said that the migrant workers who moved from cities back to their villages or have joined back the employer after the lockdown period ended, were unable to arrange for supporting documents for seeding of Aadhaar number with the UAN.

> *employees whose Aadhaar numbers have already been provided to the EPFO can deposit the provident fund without awaiting verification from the Unique Identification Authority of India*

The EPFO submitted that the deadline for linking has been extended till December 31 for establishments in the North East and a certain class of establishments but no further extension could be granted in general for those employees whose Aadhaar is not seeded with the UAN as adequate time has already passed since the first notification came out in October 2017 when employers were asked to begin the process of seeding the employee's accounts with the Aadhaar number. The court was informed that the total number of employees whose validation is yet to be done is only 29,26,479.

Source: www.newindianexpress.com

India Will Benefit from Agile Labour Codes. Look At China, Bangladesh and Vietnam for Results

Most of India's labour laws were framed shortly after independence when it was a predominantly manufacturing/agrarian economy, often stuck in the quagmire of a License Raj. The protectionist and socialist undertones determining the labour laws at the time led to the creation of a labyrinth of over 40 different legislations regulating different aspects of employer and employee relationships, which primarily catered to the needs and rights of the worker.

India's existing laws focus on income and job security rather than boosting job creation. This is evident from provisions such as the prohibition of contract workers, strict laws pertaining to termination of employees, unionising and strikes. However, India's liberalisation drive has placed it in the centre of a globalised world economy by boosting the services sector. Particularly IT/ITeS contributes over 7% of India's GDP and that number is set to rise to 10% by 2025and create 3 million jobs. In an increasingly shrinking world, workers need to cater to global norms and supply chains which needs to be fostered by Indian legislation

The pandemic has brought into sharp focus the scuffed edges created by trying to use square pegs of India's existing labour laws to plug the round holes of service and technology. Covid-19 has highlighted new trends, such as work from home, part-time workers and gig workers while exposing the failures of the existing system to facilitate ease of doing business. Multiple compliances and administrative procedures covering key issues such as business registration, rules governing migrant workers make it difficult for employers to unlock the potential of India's skilled and unskilled workforce. The proposed labour codes will play a cardinal role in sparking India economy's V-Shaped recovery.

China, and more recently Bangladesh and Vietnam, have shown the benefits of agile labour codes which India should look to emulate. The pandemic and onset of technology have created new opportunities for employment, such as work from home, part-time employment, contract workers and gig workers. This provides opportunities for women and students to partake in India's economy while simultaneously empowering them. The new labour codes need to recognise contract labourers and make provisions for them. Sharp spikes typically govern services such as IT/ITeS and e-commerce activities. Unlike traditional manufacturing, these industries witness increased activity during festivals, holiday seasons, and sales. Adopting measures to recognise and promote contract working will aid businesses during phases of increased activity while providing part-time employment to many Indians.

As India pushes for global leadership, it must discard antiquated practices and apply an agile approach to facilitate growth. One such example is standing orders. Standing orders were devised to protect factory workers by stipulating conditions, such as working hours. The rigidity of such measures will affect the service industry, particularly businesses with global clients. Working according to client time zones, establishing patterns specific to projects, and options to work remotely will be hampered if sectors such as finance, consulting, IT/ITeS and E-commerce are not exempted from notifying standing orders.

Moreover, the IT/ITes sector has in place robust grievance mechanisms and adhere to global work culture practices and hence should be exempted. Multiple surveys show that IT/ITeS companies are recognised as great places to work due to their employee-first practices and policies. A critical factor to the success of the industry in a free-market economy is its operational independence. Major economies across the world, including those of the USA, China and Japan, have a five-day workweek. Studies have found that employees who dedicate more time to recreation are happier and work more efficiently. This benefits the health of both the employee and the establishment. In this context, an 8-hour workday will force companies to operate on a 6-day work week model which will compromise employee satisfaction and also hamper hiring, as companies will be reluctant to engage people over time. The number of hours should be capped at 48 hours, with a 10/12-hour daily limit to aid operational flexibility. With the new codes already providing for flexibility in working hours, states need to ensure the same does not become exploitative.

A large number of businesses in India recruit employees from across the country through remote working facilities. As per the laws, an employer needs to register an establishment in every state where it has employees under the Shops and Establishments Act(s). This results in an avoidable increased compliance burden increase the costs for business with no additional productivity and hinder the ease of doing business for the industry. The new codes need to implement a single unified S&E registration. One of the defining legacies of this government has been the push to digitize India and make it a global leader. India's goal to become a trillion-dollar economy can only be achieved by establishing codes to foster growth and jobs and income of workers, which would, in turn, drive the security and stability of employees.

The service industry driven by technology-intensive sectors such as IT/ITeS, e-commerce, financial services and consultancy has immense potential. The labour laws need to promote employment, quality of employment and income in these sectors by enabling businesses operating in this sector.

Disclaimer: (Aruna Sharma, IAS, is Former Secretary to the Govt. of India. The opinions expressed in this column are that of the writer).

Source: Economic Times

Big News for EPFO Subscribers! You Will Be Able to Choose How Much Part Will Be Invested in Equity! Expect Higher Returns

The Employees' Provident Fund Organization i.e., EPFO is considering giving an opportunity to all its subscribers to opt for equity investment. Till now crores of subscribers of EPFO do not have this option and EPFO itself invests up to 15% in the equity market through its fund managers.

Increased interest of people in NPS: In fact, the interest of people in the PFRDA regulated National Pension Scheme (NPS) is increasing rapidly, as the National Pension Scheme gives the option of investing in equities from private employees to government employees, and there is also the flexibility to fix the investment limit. Under the National Pension Scheme, the subscribers are getting an average return of up to 12% in equity investment.

EPFO is also on the way to NPS: Therefore, on the lines of NPS, EPFO can also allow its crores of subscribers to fix the limit of total investment by increasing the limit of equity investment for better returns. However, there is a possibility that in no case more than 50% of the contribution will be allowed to be invested in equities. If this happens, then employees will get an opportunity to invest more part of their EPFO investment in equities, which will benefit in the form of higher returns.

Employee's EPF contribution to increase by 12%! In the coming days, many more big decisions related to the Employees' Provident Fund (EPFO) can be taken in the meeting of the Central Board of Trustees. At present, 12% of the basic salary of an employee of a company is deposited in the Employee Provident Fund (EPF), and the company's management can increase it, but the EPFO is of the view that in the coming days, the employee will now have to contribute more than 12%. Option to deposit in EPF will be given.

Source: Business League

EPFO Likely to Pay Interest Early to Boost Festive Spirit

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) is likely to credit the interest rate for FY21 before Diwali to cheer millions of people ahead of the festive season. This will coincide with government employees and pensioners getting their dearness allowance and dearness relief hike, at least two government officials said, asking not to be named. The move could cheer the salaried class, which has faced months of job loss and income loss due to Covid.

The EPFO's central board has approved the interest rate. The retirement fund manager has sought the finance ministry's nod and is expected to get a go-ahead soon, said one of the two officials mentioned above. "Authorities have sought the finance ministry's approval on going ahead with the 8.5% interest rate for 2020-21. When the decisions were made about the interest, all factors have been taken into account and the fund manager is well placed to pay 8.5% rate," said this official. "Though some argue that the finance ministry's approval is just a matter of protocol, the EPFO cannot credit the interest rate without its approval. EPFO is expecting a go-ahead based on its board's decision and comfortable financial position," according to the other official.

In March, the board recommended an 8.5% payout for FY21. EPFO has pegged an income of around ₹70,300 crores in the previous fiscal, including around ₹4,000 crores from selling a portion of its equity investments. "The equity market has grown very well since our last board meeting. This also gives us a cushion as our stock exposure has led to good earning even though it's notional till liquidation," said the second official.

The BSE Sensex was at a little less than 51,000 on March 4 when the board had met last and on September 3 it closed at 58,129.95. The interest rate recommended is a result of combined income from interest received from debt investments and income realized from equity investments, the retirement fund body said after its central board meeting. "This has enabled EPFO to provide higher returns to its subscribers and still allowed it to keep a healthy surplus as a cushion for providing higher returns in the future," it had said.

Source: Hindustan Times

Labour And Employment Minister Bhupender Yadav Releases Labour Bureau's First Quarterly Employment Survey Of 2021

Nine major non-farm sectors of the economy have shown an employment growth of 29% since 2014, as per the first Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) of the All-India Quarterly Establishment-based Employment Survey (AQEES) of the Labour Bureau. The survey report covering April-June, 2021 period was released by Labour and Employment Minister Bhupender Yadav.

The AQEES has been taken up by the Labour Bureau to provide quarterly updates about employment and related variables of establishments, in both organised and unorganised segments of nine selected sectors.

The nine sectors altogether account for a majority of the total employment in the country's non-farm establishments. These sectors are Manufacturing, Construction, Trade, Transport, Education, Health, Accommodation and Restaurant, IT/ BPO and Financial Services.

Announcing the results, Yadav said the estimated total employment in the nine selected sectors from the first round of QES is 3.08 crores approximately, against a total of 2.37 crores in these sectors collectively, as per the sixth Economic Census (2013-14), reflecting thereby a growth rate of 29%.

The overall participation of female workers stood at 29%, slightly lower than 31% reported during the 6th Economic Census, the report showed. Yadav said Manufacturing accounts for nearly 41% followed by Education with 22%, and Health with 8%. Trade as well as IT/BPO each engaged 7% of the total estimated number of workers.

The Minister said scientifically collected data with purity and integrity that can be cross-examined will be immensely beneficial towards achieving targeted and last-mile delivery of government programmes and schemes. Sharing the findings on the pandemic-induced employment retrenchment/decline, the labour minister said the impact was evident in 27% of the establishments.

However, the silver lining was that 81% of the workers received full wages during the lock-down period (25 March-30 June 2020). The Key Highlights of the first Quarterly Employment Survey showed that the most impressive growth of 152% was recorded in the IT/BPO sector, while growth rates in Health are 77%, Education 39%, Manufacturing 22%, Transport 68% and in Construction it is 42%. However, employment in Trade came down by 25% and in Accommodation & Restaurant, the decline was by 13%. Financial services saw a growth rate in employment of 48%.

Nearly 90% of the establishments have been estimated to work with less than 100 workers, the corresponding figure during the sixth Economic Census being 95%. Nearly 35% of the IT/ BPO establishments worked with at least 100 workers, including about 13.8% engaging 500 workers or more. In the Health sector, 18% of the establishments had 100 or more workers.

Source: www.thestatesman.com

What Is 'Right to Sit', The Tamil Nadu Bill That Mandates Seating Facilities for Shop Workers

The Tamil Nadu government formally presented a bill in the state assembly requiring shops, storefronts, and commercial establishments to provide employees with seating facilities. Announced by Labour and Employment Minister C.V. Ganesan, the 'Right to Sit' Bill has been welcomed by members of the state's workforce, according to a report by The Times of India.

The Tamil Nadu Shops and Establishments (Amendment) Act, 2021, is inspired by a Kerala bill that was first tabled in July 2018 before it became law in January 2019, after women, textile workers in the state protested against harsh conditions in 2016.

In the Kerala Shops and Commercial Establishments (Amendment) Ordinance 2018, seating facilities were mentioned by way of adding a new section in the Kerala Shops and Commercial Establishments Act, 1960.

"In every shop and establishment, suitable arrangements for sitting shall be provided for all workers to avoid 'on the toes' situation throughout the duty time, so that they may take advantage of any opportunity to sit which may occur during the course of their work," the new Section 21B of the Tamil Nadu Shops and Establishments (Amendment) Act, 2021, says. In Tamil Nadu's case, the bill proposes to amend the Tamil Nadu Shops and Establishments Act, 1947, which provides for "regulation of conditions of work in shops, commercial establishments, restaurants, theatres and other establishments".

Why Tamil Nadu pushed for the case?

The problems faced by members of Tamil Nadu's workforce in industries like jewellery and textiles have been widely reported on in recent years workers were being forced to stand throughout their daily 10-12 hour shifts and not being allowed timely breaks. According to the Deccan Herald and the Free Press Journal, the wording of the Tamil Nadu government's proposed amendment bill mirrors that of Kerala's, including the aim of avoiding "on the toes" situation and alleviating the "plight" of workers having to stand while at work all day. "Many large multi-department showrooms, leading textile and jewellery brands in Tamil Nadu presently do not provide chairs or stools for salespersons to sit during work hours. Due to this, they are forced to stand up to 10 hours or even beyond attending to customers, leading to physical strain and varicose veins," said a report in the Journal.

Source: The Print

450 Women Sign Petition Over POSH Compliance

More than 450 women from Hyderabad have signed a petition to demand the State government and Women and Children Welfare Department to look into the lack of compliance in implementing the Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, commonly known as the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act (POSH).

With remote working coming to an end at most places, the threat of sexual harassment at workplaces has re-emerged. While there is already a law to safeguard women from harassment at the workplace, the execution of the law is extremely poor in the State, especially in the unorganised sectors. Member of WomComMatters, a citizen's collective, Pranava Maheshwari said, "While our team was looking into the policy under our initiative Awwaz-e-Telangana to get details of the implementation of the law, we found that there is almost no data available on both State and national forums on how many companies and districts comply with the guidelines."

Another member of the team, Lakshmi Priyanka said, "Hyderabad has an IT hub which employs a lot of female workers. Surprisingly, not many employees have proper knowledge of POSH and the situation is worst in the unorganised sector."

Source: newindianexpress.com

Beginning Of The End Of WFH: Wipro, HDFC, Axis Bank Get Ready to Work With 100% Staff at Office

As the number of Covid infections plummets and companies' complete vaccination drive, India Inc is actively working on returning to the formal workplace albeit with a staggering roster. Companies like Procter & Gamble, Wipro, HDFC, Axis Bank, Yes Bank and Deloitte are among the top corporates getting ready to re-open their offices within the next couple of months, the Economic Times mentioned in a report. While some of the corporates have started operations at pre-Covid levels, others are seeking to get more employees to the office. The financial pack banks, NBFCs and fintech companies are at the vanguard of the move.

"As of date, all our offices are working at 100% manpower in line with the directives issued by the respective state governments. We have allowed expectant mothers, female employees with children below 1 year of age, employees above 65 years of age, employees with co-morbidities and employees coming from any containment zones as defined by the authorities to continue to work from home," the financial daily quoted as saying Renu Sud Karnad, managing director, HDFC.

Kotak Mahindra Bank expects that 90% of the employees, who are fully vaccinated, will be back in the office by November/December. "In branches and other customer-facing roles, we are close to reaching 100% levels," the publication quoted as saying Sukhjit Pasricha, president & group chief human resource officer, Kotak Mahindra Bank. Some corporations have even created sub-groups, sought online applications and roped in external professionals to assess risks and encourage more employees to start coming to offices.

Take, for instance, the case of P&G. The multinational has introduced a hybrid model customised for each working group. "Every workgroup is piloting a hybrid model suited for it. It's up to them how they manage their well-being, work and personal priorities and how they continue to improve their productivity to maximise their impact on their growth and work," said PM Srinivas, head, human resources, P&G, Indian sub-continent.

Most companies are experimenting with the return-to-workplace policies as the danger of a third wave still lurks and many employees are still not completely convinced about safety. "The popular pulse certainly favours hybrid working so that people can benefit from both, the flexibility and comfort of working from home and the human connect of coming to the office this is something that is being deeply examined to allow for flexibility, client deliverables and social connections as that engenders collaboration and innovation," said SV Nathan, partner and chief talent officer, Deloitte India. Many companies have asked their top management and regional leaders to start attending the office regularly to encourage other employees to return to the office. "Beginning September 13, fully vaccinated employees in leadership roles have returned to work from offices in India, twice a week (Mondays and Thursdays)," a Wipro spokesperson said.

Source: www.timesnownews.com

Employees State Insurance Scheme: Free Treatment Is Available in The Scheme, Know Rules and Complete Information

What is ESIC Scheme: The Union Ministry of Labour runs this scheme for the health benefits of low-income salaried employees. The hospitals under this are run by the state government. The benefit of this scheme is available to the employees working in private companies and factories. To take advantage of free treatment under ESIC, you have to go to an ESI dispensary or hospital.

After registering in this scheme, you will be given a card. Through this card, free treatment can be done by visiting the hospital or dispensary.

Benefits of ESI Card: Employees covered under this scheme get many benefits. First of all, the insured person and his family members get free treatment. In addition, 91 days of cash is paid for sick leave. Women on maternity leave are paid 100% of the average wage for up to 26 weeks of delivery and up to 6 weeks in case of abortion. In case of temporary disability, till recovery and in case of permanent disability, the facility of whole life monthly pension is available. Apart from this, dependents get pension, unemployment allowance, free treatment after retirement, up to Rs. 7500 if the woman delivers outside the ESIC hospital. Apart from this, if death occurs during treatment, then Rs. 15000 are also given as funeral expenses.

The ESIC scheme is self-financing social security and health insurance scheme for workers. For which Employee State Insurance Corporation ESI Act Rules and Regulations have been made. To provide medical assistance to employees as defined by the ESI Act 1948 in the event of health-related generally sickness, maternity, temporary or permanent disability, occupational injury or death due to employment injury, etc.

Who can avail of the benefits of the ESIC Scheme?

The number of employees in the organization, company, factories, road transport, hotels, restaurants, cinema, newspapers, shops, educational/medical institutions, etc. you work should be 10 or more, whereas in many states the coverage is required in establishments. The limit is still 20. Under a scheme by the Government of India, the employee whose salary is up to Rs 21,000 per month (whereas before 2017 limit was Rs. 15000), they have been included in this scheme. This limit of 21,000 applies to all Permanent and Contract/Outsource Workers. Overtime or bonus amount is not included in this limit of 21,000. With this, you can decide whether you are eligible under this scheme or not.

Source: Business League

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