

Centre's thrust on welfare of beedi workers

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Hyderabad, February 4:

Beedi workers are in for a bit of much needed help from the Union Government. An increase in housing subsidy and cover under the EPF and ESI are on the anvil.

The housing subsidy will be hiked to ₹ 1.5 lakh from the existing ₹ 40,000. The Union Ministry of Labour and Employment is planning to construct 10,000 houses for beedi workers in the State of Telangana.

The Ministry is also firming up opportunities to provide the services of Employees Provident Fund and ESI facilities to those employed in beedi sector, which is quite large in the newest State. All the beedi workers' hospitals located in the State would be merged with the ESIC Hospitals. First upgraded hospital will be constructed in Nirmal, Adilabad, according to Bandaru Dattatreya, the minister of State.

Under Social Security Scheme 18 lakh contract labourers will be covered under the services of ESIC. In this regard, a decision has to be taken after consulting the ESIC board officials, he told newsmen here today.

The Ministry has proposed to set up three 100-bedded hospitals in Ramagundam, Warangal and Ghoshamahall (Hyderabad), if the State Government allocates land. He held a review meeting with the Telangana State Labour Minister Nayini Narasimha Reddy and other officials with the Central Labour Ministry officials.

He said that the ESIC dispensaries at Tandur, Doulatabad, Khammam, Suryapet, Maheswaram, Siddipet and Kalvakurthy would be upgraded to 6-bedded hospitals. Each hospital will be provided ₹ 10 crores for construction and infrastructure facilities. The State needs to provide land for the projects to take shape quickly, he told the State minister.

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Dattatreya said that a decision has to be taken on the request of Government of Telangana to set up 2 Sub Regional ESIC Centres at Ramagundam and Kothagudem and one Employees Provident Fund Regional office at Khammam.

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