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EPFO cuts administrative charges to 0.5 % of total wage paid by employers

Now over 5 lakh employers together would save around Rs 900 crore annually following the retirement fund body EPFO's decision to cut administrative charges, with effect from June 1, 2018. The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation's (EPFO) trustees had decided to cut the administrative charges to 0.50 per cent from 0.65 per cent of total wage paid by employers in its meeting on February 21, 2018. "The labour ministry has notified the decision to cut administrative charges, which would be effective from June 1, 2018. This will encourage employers to formalise their workers employment by bringing them under the ambit of social security schemes run by the EPFO," the retirement fund body's Central Provident Fund Commissioner V P Joy told PTI. The EPFO decided to cut the administrative charges in view of its expanding business and high recovery of such fees. According to the EPFO estimates, the employers would save in total around Rs 900 crore annually after this move. During the last fiscal, the EPFO had collected around Rs 3,800 crore as administrative charges from the employers for running its social security schemes. The EPFO has accumulated surplus of over Rs 20,000 crore in the administrative charges account which earns an interest income of over Rs 1,600 crore per annum. Explaining the rationale behind cutting administrative charges, Joy said the EPFO would not be affected by the cut in administrative charges because of increasing subscribers' contribution base. The administrative charges are levied as proportion of total wages of employees on which employers pays their contribution. The EPFO had reduced administrative charges from 1.10 per cent to 0.85 per cent from January 1, 2015. It was further reduced to 0.65 per cent from April 1, 2017.

EPFO numbers on jobs are bogus, say labour activists

Labour activists and unions have debunked the State government's claims of having created more than eight lakh jobs in seven months in the organised sector. Labour unions claimed on Saturday, a day after the State released the latest data, that the intention of the government drive was to register eligible units, raise the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation's (EPFO) exposure to the stock market and increase its annual incremental corpus in equities. "The statistics are not a true reflection of the real employment situation in Maharashtra. These jobs were created long ago, but only surfaced during the drive to register the eligible units past six months. The idea to highlight selective numbers is to give a favourable picture of the bleak job situation in the State," said Uday Bhat, general secretary of the Maharashtra Rajya Sarvashramik Mahasangh. As per the EPFO statistics, the State created eight lakh jobs in the organised sector in seven months, topping a list of six states, including Tamil Nadu and Gujarat. "The country has seen creation of 39.36 lakh jobs in the organised sector during the period from September 2017 to March 2018. Maharashtra has bagged the first position by creating 8,17,302 employment opportunities in this sector," Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis had said on Friday.

Now, shed, toilets, water filters at Maharashtra construction workers' assembly points

The State Labour Department has proposed to provide facilities such as shed, mobile toilets and water filters at the assembly points of construction workers, commonly known as Kamgar nakas, across Maharashtra. Officials from the State Labour Department said the issue had been raised during a meeting of the Maharashtra Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board held earlier this week. Following this, State Labour Minister Sambhaji Patil-Nilangekar instructed the Board officials to work on providing facilities at the sites. "At the nakas, the construction workers daily gather during morning hours in search of work. However, at present there are no facilities provided by the department. They face difficulties in the absence of these basic facilities, especially during summer and monsoon seasons," said an official.

Bigbasket reacts after post showing alleged inhuman work condition of delivery boy goes viral

Online grocery store Bigbasket today came forward to clarify on the condition of its delivery boys after a picture of the same went viral on social media. Saurabh Trivedi, a Facebook user took to the social media platform to complain about the alleged inhumane working condition in which the delivery boys are made to work. He said, "Even the animals shouldn't be treated like this." Trivedi, while bringing this to the notice of the company also tagged Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India, Ravi Shankar Prasad on his post. Bigbasket took note of the situation and clarified the company's stand on the same. It replied, "We feel as pained as all of you who have expressed anger regarding the weight of the loads. We are very conscious of the hardships our delivery boys go through." The company further said "our process does not allow a delivery boy to take a load in excess of 15 kilograms. As soon as an order for a route exceeds 15 kilograms in weight, it is split into two routes by our route optimization software." It further said, "the key reason for the voluminous bag is that we have used crates (rather than smaller bags) for packing orders. Crates minimize damage to products in transit, but make life a little more difficult for the delivery boys." BigBasket also said, "We are acutely aware of the need to help our delivery boys in the context of their overall well-being. With this in mind, we have been quietly operating a Trust for all our blue-collar staff, including the delivery boys."

Important To Separate Sentiment From Facts On H1-B: Nasscom Chairman

Amid the Donald Trump administration's heightened scrutiny of H1B work visas and uncertainty among workers, Nasscom Chairman Rishad Premji has said that it is important to "separate the sentiment from the fact" regarding the visas. "I think it is important to separate the sentiment from fact," Premji told *PTI* in an interview today. He asserted that of the 65,000 H1B visas issued every year, the Indian IT industry uses less than 10,000, adding that 70 percent of visas go to Indians, not to Indian companies. "This is very, very important to appreciate." He added that by 2020 there will be a shortage of 2.4 million people, according to data from the Department of Labour, in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) talent in the U.S., and half of these will be in the computer and IT related services. Premji stressed that there is a base of seven million people in the technology space in the U.S. "We are talking about 10,000 people on a seven million strong base....We have got to put things in context," he said. Premji, the Chief Strategy Officer and Member of the Board at Indian IT services giant Wipro, was in the city to address the NASSCOM C-Summit.

At current rates, Bangladesh could top India's per capita income by 2020

After trailing its big neighbour for four decades, Bangladesh has gone ahead of India in economic growth and on social development indicators. In the three years ending 2016, Bangladesh's gross domestic product (at current prices) in dollar terms grew at a compounded annual rate (CAGR) of 12.9 per cent, more than twice India's 5.6 per cent. Over the same period, Pakistan grew faster than India too, at a CAGR of 8.6 per cent, driven by a surge in investment and export. The Chinese economy expanded at an annualised 5.2 per cent. As a result, per capita income (in dollar terms) in Bangladesh is now growing at nearly thrice the pace of income growth in India. At \$1,355 in 2016, Bangladesh's per capita income was up 40 per cent in three years against 14 per cent growth in India and 21 per cent growth in Pakistan. At this rate, Bangladesh's per capita income would top India's by the year 2020. Currently, a typical Indian has 25 per cent higher income than her eastern neighbour; in 2011, Indians earned 87 per cent more.

