NEW DELHI:

Bandaru Dattatreya-led labour ministry has open up a three-month window for employers/enterprises to register themselves and their employees under the Employee State Insurance Corporation to avail of medical facilities of the government.

"To extend the coverage to the entire workforce a new employer friendly scheme has been approved at the 170th meeting of EISC, chaired by labour minister," a statement from ESIC said.

According to the statement, this is a one-time opportunity to encourage the employers to register themselves, to register employees, if any, who have been left out of coverage including contractual, casual, temporary etc. "The proposed scheme will remain open for a period of three months from January 1, 2017 to March 31, 2017," it said.

Under the proposed scheme, the employers registering during the period will be treated as covered from the date of registration or as declared by them while the newly registered employees shall be treated as covered from the date of their registration. "This will not have any bearing on actions taken/required under ESI Act, if any, prior to 1st January, 2017," it said. Besides, the ESIC chairman may be authorized to remove difficulties, if any, in implementing the scheme.

Further, to improve the medical services under state run ESI facilities, the ESI Corporation has also decided to increase per capita ceiling of sharing expenditure with state governments from existing Rs 2150 to Rs 3000 with sub ceiling of Rs 1250 for "Administration" and Rs 1750 for "Others".
"With enhancement of this ceiling, the state governments may now further equip better their medical services to ESI beneficiaries in its ESI medical institutions. The enhanced ceiling of will be fixed from 2017-2018 to 2019-2020 and reviewed annually from 2020-21 on the basis of WPI and expenditure pattern of the states," it said.

ESIC has been paying the cash benefits to its beneficiaries directly in their Bank Accounts. The Corporation spent a total of Rs.6819.47 crores in the year 2015-16 on medical, cash and other benefits to its over 2.5 crore subscribers.

**Domestic workers to be brought under ESIC fold:**

**HYDERABAD:** As part of its vision to provide health insurance for all, the government will bring domestic workers under the ESIC fold and soon launch pilot projects in Delhi and Hyderabad in this regard, Union Labour Minister Bandaru Dattatreya said today.

"As part of the social security, domestic workers would be brought under the ESIC. So, for the first time in the country, we will be taking up two pilot projects -- in Delhi and Hyderabad. There are two components. One is employee contribution and the other one is employer contribution," Dattatreya told reporters here.

"We will organize a workshop with all the stakeholders soon, in this regard to finalize the modalities," said the Minister.

According to him, the scheme will benefit about one crore domestic workers in the country.

He also said the Group of Ministers led by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has also earlier discussed how to bring Asha and Anganwadi workers under ESIC and offer Provident Fund services.
"A committee will be set up with Joint Secretaries of Ministries of HRD, Health and Women and Child Welfare as members and a senior official from the Ministry of Labour as convener. This committee will also take part in the workshop we proposed to hold on domestic workers," the Minister further said. ..

Dattatreya also said he will examine the implementation of recommendations of Majthia Wage Board for working journalists.

Replying to a query, on the ongoing agitation by Home Guards in Telangana, the minister said the state government should concentrate on solving their problems.

**ESIC scheme: Reduction in insurance contribution of employers, employees takes effect:**

From October 2016, the employees and employers contribution rate in Employee's State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) had been reduced to 1% and 3% of the wages respectively from 1.75% and 4.75% in the first time implemented areas for the initial 24 months from the date of implementation.

However, there have been some glitches in the software which is preventing the employers to upload the correct values against the contribution of employees. So till the time the modifications are made to the software, the employers have been asked to file the monthly contribution details as usual.

However, for the actual payment into the bank account, the employees need to calculate at the reduced rate, which will be reconciled by the ESIC at a later date.
ESIC to provide free health checkup to subscribers:

NEW DELHI:

Employees' State Insurance Corp has decided to offer free annual health checkup to insured members with age 40 and above under its health insurance scheme.

"A large section of insured persons are working under harsh and hazardous industrial environment and hence are more likely to develop illness... it has been decided to provide annual preventive health checkups for members with age 40 and above," ESIC has said in an office order.

Besides routine general physical or clinical examination, the health checkup will include tests for blood sugar, kidney, liver, check X-Ray and ECG.

ESIC will maintain electronic record of these checkups of insured persons and will be uploaded in the electronic health record of patients.

The health insurance scheme run by the ESIC provide cover to not only the two crore insured persons but also to their dependents in the family. Thus the scheme covers around 10 crore people in the country.

ESIC hikes fund flows for state-run facilities by Rs 1.8K crore:

NEW DELHI: To improve quality of services at state-run health facilities, Employees State Insurance Corp has decided to increase its share of expenditure from Rs 2,150 per insured person to Rs 3,000, which would result in additional Rs 1,810 crore with states.

Besides, Employees State Insurance Corp (ESIC) has also given a window of three months till
March 31, 2017 to workers to enroll themselves for its health insurance scheme which also covers their dependent family member.

At present, there are 2.13 crore insured persons under ESI scheme. The number of beneficiaries covered under the scheme is now 8.28 crore.

"In order to improve the medical services under state-run ESI facilities, ESIC has today approved increase in per capita ceiling of sharing expenditure with states from existing Rs 2150 to Rs 3000," said ESIC in a statement issued after its 170th meeting chaired by Labour Minister Bandaru Dattatreya today.

The decision will substantially increase the funds flow from ESIC to state-run health facilities like hospitals and dispensaries.

ESIC provides fund for state-run facilities based on the number of insured persons in state. The move will translate into additional funds of Rs 1,810 crore with the states.

ESIC said that with enhancement of this ceiling, the state governments may now further equip better their medical services to ESI Beneficiaries in its ESI medical institutions.

The enhanced ceiling of Rs 3000 will be fixed from 2017-2018 to 2019-2020 and reviewed annually from 2020-21 on the basis of WPI (wholesale price index) and expenditure pattern of the states.

It said that to extend the coverage to the entire workforce, a new employer friendly scheme has also been approved as one time opportunity to encourage the employers as well as employees to register themselves. This includes left out of employees including contractual, casual, temporary etc.
The proposed scheme will remain open for a period of three months from January 1, 2017 to March 31, 2017.

Under the scheme the employers registering during the period will be treated as covered from the date of registration or as declared by them.

Besides the newly registered employees shall be treated as covered from the date of their registration. Moreover this will not have any bearing on actions taken/required under ESI Act, if any, prior to January 1, 2017.

It said that total revenue of the ESIC is Rs 14,372.22 crores during the year 2015-16 in comparison to Rs 13,588.58 crores last year. The corporation spent a total of Rs 6819.47 crores in the year 2015-16 on Medical, Cash and other benefits, it said adding that its Annual Report and Annual Accounts for the year 2015-2016 for submitting to the Central Government and laying on the table of both Houses of the Parliament.

**ESIC to start two six-bed hospitals in Hyderabad: Bandaru Dattatreya**

HYDERABAD: The Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) will start six-bedded hospitals at Qutubhullapur and Chikkadpally dispensaries here with their own buildings, Union Minister Bandaru Dattatreya said today.

The Union Minister of State for Labour and Employment had held a review meeting with officials of various departments here.

"Wherever the dispensaries are located in rented buildings, the state government should provide free-of-cost space to build dispensaries by the ESI Corporation," an official release quoted the
The minister further said that the ESI Corporation is contemplating to cover (medical insurance) unorganized laborers like auto-rickshaw drivers, rickshaw pullers, construction workers and cine workers under the ESI Scheme on a pilot basis in Hyderabad.

Dattatreya asked the Endowments Department officials to provide water facility and other amenities to devotees near temples.

He also instructed them for landscape/greenery in and around all the temples to provide the places of worship a good ambiance.

"There are certain instances where the lands of temples are being encroached upon for which machinery has to be set up to look into all such things," he said adding that properties of the temples are to be protected from undue influence of politicians.

**Firms having less than 10 employees to be covered under ESIC:**

NEW DELHI: Government is in the process of providing ESIC services to establishments having less than 10 employees and a committee has been formed to widen the scope of the facility.

"Presently, ESIC coverage is given to establishments having 10 or more employees. Now, we are going to give ESIC coverage for establishments having less than 10 workers. "For this, a mechanism has to be developed. We have formed a committee to look into all aspects of it," Labour Minister Bandaru Dattatreya said in a media briefing on ESIC schemes here today.

Dattatreya said the Ministry will extend the Employees’ State Insurance Scheme (ESIC) coverage to construction site workers by April, 2016.
For unorganised workers in self employed categories such as auto rickshaw drivers, car drivers, rickshaw pullers, the Ministry will cover them under ESIC by November 30 in selected urban/metropolitan areas.

On pilot basis, the proposal is to start in Delhi and Hyderabad by November 30, 2015.

Further, ESIC will extend the cover in three north-eastern states of Mizoram, Manipur and
Arunachal Pradesh in addition to union territory Andaman & Nicobar Island by the end of December.

Of other things, ESIC presently covers 830 centres of major industrial or commercial clusters involving 2.03 insured persons (IPs) in 393 districts, and government will extend it to cover whole of these districts by March 2016.

Dattatreya also said that 24 ESIC dispensaries have been identified for upgradation to 30 bed hospital, e-health records to enable IPs and their family members to view e-prescriptions and tests reports online and tele medicine services.

The Ministry will also implement 24X7 medical helpline facility at 1800 11 3839, oncology and cardiology facility in hospitals by December 31, dialysis facility in all ESIC Model Hospitals on PPP model by December and AYUSH facilities to all dispensaries in phases.

He also said that a special OPD for senior citizens has been launched already.

Dattatreya said the government has taken new initiatives in the second generation of reforms in ESIC.
Upcoming reforms

Recently, the Labour Ministry opened up a three-month window for the employers to register themselves and their employees under the ESIC to avail of the government's medical facilities.

It is a one-time opportunity to encourage the employers to register themselves and their employees -- contractual, casual, or temporary -- who have been left out coverage. The proposed scheme will remain open for a period of three months from January 1 to March 31 2017, In another attempt, over 2 crore formal sector workers will soon have an option to choose health insurance products available in the market (from private players) in lieu of the mandatory scheme run by the ESIC.