

## **PRESS RELEASE**

The 1<sup>st</sup> of May is celebrated all over the World as International Labour Day to honour the contribution and sacrifice made by the working class. On this occasion, Shri Mallikarjun Kharge, Hon'ble Minister for Labour & Employment, Govt. of India has extended his warmest greetings and best wishes to workers all over the country. This day reminds that only with the mutual cooperation of workers, employers, Governments and the Civil Society, a solid foundation can be laid in building our Nation.

2. Hon'ble Minister, Shri Kharge also said, "While reiterating that we would continuously pursue our efforts to promote the welfare of workers, I once again convey my best wishes on this auspicious day."

3. In the recent past the Government of India has undertaken several important measures for improving the working conditions and welfare of the working class.

4. In his message, Shri Kharge informed about the Health Insurance Scheme for the poor titled 'Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana' (RSBY) which has become operational from 01.04.2008. The scheme envisages provision of health insurance to unorganized workers with smart card based cashless hospitalization facilities worth up to Rs.30,000/-. As on 31.03.2013, more than 3.44 crore cards have been issued, more than 11.00 crore members are expected to be benefited from this Scheme and 51.68 lakh people have availed the hospitalization benefits. The coverage of RSBY has been extended to street vendors, construction workers, Beedi workers, domestic workers, MGNREGA workers and licensed Railway porters. Impact of RSBY is visible in improvement in access to healthcare, health infrastructure being set up in remote areas by the private sector, Public Sector hospitals competing and improving performance to gain access to flexible funds and incentives provided under RSBY, penetration in the areas affected by extremist activities and marked improvement in utilization of services by women in the scheme.

5. It has also been informed by Hon'ble Minister, that in pursuance of Government's commitment to eliminate child labour in hazardous occupations and processes, the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme is being implemented in 271 districts. As a result, 8.52 lakh children from special schools of NCLPs have been mainstreamed into the formal education system. Due to various initiatives taken by the Ministry of Labour & Employment, there has been significant drop in the number of child labour from an estimated 90.75 lakh during 2004-05 to 49.85 lakh in 2009-10.

6. Under the Scheme of "Skill Development Initiative", demand driven short-term training courses based on Modular Employable Skill framework have been developed for skill development of the school leavers and workers especially in the informal sector. 14.81 lakh persons have been trained since inception, Shri Kharge informed.

7. The Hon'ble Minister said that a new scheme has been proposed namely, "Kaushal Vikas Yojana" to set up 3000 ITIs & 5000 Skill Development Centres (SDCs) in PPP mode across the country . The Ministry also proposes to constitute a National Board of Trade Testing and Certification (NBTTTC)

to conduct trade examination for various schemes of DGE&T / NCVT. It will have independent functioning and will have no interferences from the Government in conducting the tests. Ministry of Labour and Employment has moved a proposal for making NCVT a statutory body.

8. **The Employees' State Insurance Corporation has taken up new initiatives to improve the quality of service delivery. These include coverage of new geographical areas, implementation of an IT rollout plan and medical education projects, the Hon'ble Minister informed lauding the efforts of ESIC.**

9. As part of the effort towards the automation of work processes to achieve efficiency and improve service delivery, all offices of EPFO have been computerized, with facility for electronic submission of statutory EPF returns with effect from 2012-13. The members can now get their PF balances, status of claims and payments online as well as receive SMS alerts on their mobile phones after registering on [www.epfindia.gov.in](http://www.epfindia.gov.in)

10. The Hon'ble Minister also informed that during the last year, Amendment Bills in respect of following Acts has been introduced in the Parliament: -

- The Child Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1986
- The Building and Other Constructions Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996.
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During the period, the Government has also approved to approach the Parliament to amend: -

- The Employment Exchanges (Compulsory Notification of Vacancies) Act, 1959
- The Minimum Wages Act, 1948

11. It is also stated in the message of Shri Kharge that the amendment in the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 , inter-alia, provide statutory status to the National Floor Level Minimum Wage (NFLMW), will make the Act applicable to all employments, provide for the revision of NFLMW every five year on the basis of NSSO Consumer Expenditure Survey, link NFLMW with variable dearness allowance (VDA) to be notified atleast once in a year on the basis of Consumer Price Index and provide for issue of employment cards to the employees which would be Aadhaar compliant, etc.

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