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# Aayakar

THE JOURNAL OF THE INCOME-TAX

EMPLOYEES FEDERATION

## AAYAKAR

Journal of the Income Tax  
Employees Federation

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in the name of

**Income Tax**

**Employees**

**Federation only.**

### MEETING WITH THE HON'BLE PRIME MINISTER ON THE ISSUE OF THE UNIFIED PENSION SCHEME ON 24th AUGUST, 2024.





## Unified Pension Scheme UPS

**1**

**Assured Pension :** 50 % of the average basic pay drawn over the last 12 months prior to superannuation for a minimum qualifying service of 25 years  
Proportionate for lesser service period upto a minimum of 10 years of service

**2**

**Assured Family Pension :**  
@60% of pension of the employee immediately before her/his demise

**3**

**Assured Minimum Pension :**  
@ 10000 per month on superannuation after minimum 10 years of service

4

Department of Expenditure



## Key features of UPS

**4**

**Inflation Indexation:**  
On assured pension, on assured family pension and assured minimum pension  
Dearness Relief based on All India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (AICPI-IW) as in case of serving employees

**5**

- Lump-Sum payment at superannuation in addition to gratuity
- 1/10<sup>th</sup> of monthly emolument (pay + DA) as on the date of superannuation for every completed six months of service
- This payment will not reduce the quantum of assured pension

5

Department of Expenditure

**Editorial****Unified Pension Scheme – A better option**

The government on 24<sup>th</sup> August, 2024, approved the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) on the basis of the recommendations of the Committee constituted in 2023 under the chairmanship of the then Finance Secretary and present Cabinet Secretary Shri T V Somanathan. Now the Central Govt. employees who joined after January 1, 2004 will have the option to shift to UPS, which is an improved version of NPS. This is a major achievement in our struggle against NPS and restoration of OPS. When we look back, some of the achievements we could register in the intervening period in our long-drawn battle against NPS include the provision of family pension to those covered by NPS on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2009, the benefit of gratuity introduced on 26<sup>th</sup> August, 2016 and inclusion of those who joined after 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2004 in OPS as the notification for recruitment was issued before 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2004 etc. The movement of government . employees for more than two decades against NPS was accelerated after the convention held on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2022, in the Talkatora stadium, New Delhi, through various forms of agitation by the Confederation of Central Government . Employees & Workers and also under the Joint Platforms of NJCA. The formation of the Joint Forum for Restoration of Old Pension Scheme (JFROPS) by the NJCA, with a massive convention on 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2023, followed by the mass signature campaign, did impact the struggle. The ITEF formed committees of NPS members at the circle level and apex level which gave the necessary impetus for massive participation of NPS subscribers in all the programs. The vibrant movement that was created subsequently was never found in earlier programs organized after the introduction of NPS. The end result is that the government saw the writing on the wall about the anger and anguish of the employees covered under the NPS and formed the committee on the last day of the budget session last year to suggest measures to bring about improvement in the scheme. But restoration of OPS was not mandated by the government. While

reiterating the demand for the restoration of OPS, the staff side of the National Council of JCM had put forth suggestions, which, to a large extent, were accepted by the Committee and incorporated in its recommendations.

The changes brought about in the NPS, albeit with a new name, are indeed a significant milestone in our struggle against the NPS. While the NPS did not guarantee an assured pension, the UPS provides for a guaranteed pension of 50% of the average of the last 12 months' basic pay, for which 25 years of minimum qualifying service are prescribed. This is a major change. An assured minimum pension of Rs. 1000.00 for those with a minimum 10 years' service is also provided for under the scheme. Further, family pension is provided on the death of the pensioner, which is 60% of the last drawn pension by the pensioner. The scheme also includes inflation indexation as per AICPIN (IW), as Dearness Relief (DR) is introduced into the scheme. In addition to gratuity, the employees under UPS will get a lump sum payment equal to 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the last drawn emoluments (Pay + DA) for every completed six months of service.

In spite of the improvements from NPS, the Unified Pension Scheme is not at all a substitute for the Old Pension Scheme. The UPS, as in the case of NPS, continues to be a contributory scheme, with the government's share enhanced to 18.5% and the employee's contribution remaining at 10%. In the NPS, at the time of retirement, employees can opt to withdraw 60% of the fund accruing to their account, which was not mentioned in the government . decision. The issue was of course subjected to discussion, and it was agreed in the last meeting that the provision to withdraw up to 60% of the accrued fund will remain. However, lump sum payment of a 1/10<sup>th</sup> of emoluments on the date of retirement for every 6 months' service completed is another relief. It was also the demand of the staff side to reduce the qualifying service to 20 years instead of 25 years in UPS.

Even though some of the key benefits of the Old Pension Scheme have been incorporated into the UPS, it still falls short of OPS, hence our expectations.



The fight against NPS and restoration of OPS started 20 years ago by the government . employees have brought some positive results, albeit slowly, step by step. While this is the success of each and every one of us, we cannot be complacent, as our ultimate aim is to restore OPS which alone will remove discrimination and give total justice to the Central Government. employees. The Confederation of Central Government. Employees and Workers, under the leadership of NJCA, will strive to achieve that objective. At this juncture, when a lot of misinformation is being spread undermining the unity built through oursustained struggles, all are requested to stay united and havefaith in theleadership. The NJCA leadership will definitely review the UPS immediately after notification and decide further course of action.

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## ORGANIZATION NEWS

No.IXA(iii)/Conference/2021-24

Dated, 4th August, 2024

### NOTICE

Notice is hereby given under Article IXA (iii) of the Constitution of the Income Tax Employees Federation for the **XXXII All India Delegates Conference of Income Tax Employees Federation, New Delhi to be held at Kolkata, West Bengal from 20th to 24th September, 2024** to discuss the following agenda items:-

### AGENDA

1. Condolence resolutions.
2. Confirmation of the minutes of the XXXI Delegates Conference held at Hyderabad from 20-23rd December, 2021.
3. Presentation, consideration and discussion on the report and accounts of 2021-22, 2022-23 & 2023-24 to be submitted by the Secretary General on behalf of the Central Working Committee of the ITEF for approval of the Delegates.
4. Matter for consideration and decision on Discipline under article XVIII of the Constitution, if any.

5. Amendment/Resolution to the Constitution, if required. **(The Circle General Secretaries and members of ITEF who desires to move resolutions for amendment/further clarification on the Constitution, must send the proposal to the Resolution Committee or ITEF, CHQ by 30th August, 2024 positively).**

6. Discussion and adoption of the Report of the Chief Election Commissioner and Chairman Disciplinary Committee, if any.

7. Discussion on Departmental and Common Issues. **(The Circle General Secretaries and members of ITEF who desires to move resolutions for discussion at the Conference on departmental and common issues must send the same so as to reach the Steering Committee or ITEF, CHQ by 31st August, 2024 positively).**

8. Discussion and adoption of resolutions on policy and programme.

9. Discussion on the proposal of CWC regarding the Renewal Fees and to take appropriate decision.

10. Discussion on matters connected with Aayakar Journal and discussion on the proposal of CWC to take appropriate decision.

11. Election of Secretariat members for the ensuing term 2024-27 of Office.

12. Discussion and adoption of appropriate resolutions on the nomination of members to Departmental Council and National Council JCM.

13. Selection/Nomination and appointment of the Assistant Secretaries, Chairman, Disciplinary Committee & Chairman, Election Commission and Auditor.

14. Any other matter with the permission of the Chair.

(RUPAK SARKAR)  
Secretary General

o0o



No. X.5(xxxxiii)/CWC/2021-24

Dated, 4th August, 2024

SEPTEMBER- 2024

### **NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given for a meeting of Central Working Committee of the Income Tax Employees Federation, New Delhi on 20th September, 2024 at 7.30 PM at the venue of XXXII All India Delegate Conference to be held at Kolkata, West Bengal for consideration the following agenda items.

### **AGENDA**

1. Confirmation of the minutes of the last CWC/ extended Secretariat meeting held on 3rd April, 2024.
2. Consideration and approval of the report and accounts to be submitted on behalf of the Secretariat of the ITEF by the Secretary General before the XXXI All India Delegates Conference of the Federation for 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24.
3. Consideration and approval of the proposal of the Secretariat for appointment of the Chairman, Election Commission, Chairman, Disciplinary Committee and Auditor for the ensuing term.
4. Discussion on the Reports of Resolution Committee and Steering Committee.
5. Discussion on the proposal on Renewal Fees and decision thereon.
6. Discussion on matters connected with Aayakar journal and decision thereon.
7. Any other matter with the permission of the Chair.

(RUPAK SARKAR)  
Secretary General

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## **CONFEDERATION NEWS**

### **Statement by Confederation of Central Government Employees & Workers, Central Headquarters, New Delhi**

The Union Cabinet yesterday (24.08.2024) approved a Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) for the Central Government Employees.

The 20 year of sustained struggle by Confederation has yielded some result.

For the first time in 20 years since inception of NPS, the Government at Centre has announced a significant improvement in Pension scheme for its employees who have joined service on or after 01.01.2004. So far it was reluctant to speak about the Pension.

But because of the sustained struggle by the Confederation along with other organisations, Govt came down and was compelled to grant \_assured\_ Pension , family Pension and minimum Pension to its employees.

The Confederation still has reservation on some of the features viz.,

1. Withdrawal from Pension corpus, lump sum payment at the time of retirement
2. Contribution of the employee
3. 12 month's average basic pay to calculate the Pension instead of last pay drawn
4. Minimum Service of 25 years and other features...

Further, it is to bring to the notice of the members that the PFRDA act did not had provisions of any benefit to NPS subscribers, except lump sum payment and Pension based on annuity plan . But our struggle forced the Government to concede the following benefits

- a. Enhance its contribution to 14% in NPS and now 18.5\_
- b. Allowed Gratuity
- c. Allowed Family Pension as has been in OPS (while death in service)
- d. Withdrawals in contribution etc.,

These above are the benefits achieved during our struggles for restoration of the OPS.

Therefore, the day is not far from achieving our declared goal. The struggle will continue till then.

The Confederation will appropriately take its decision on all provisions after going through the Notification once it is issued.

S. B Yadav  
S G Confederation

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SEPTEMBER- 2024

CONFEDERATION OF CENTRAL GOVT.  
EMPLOYEES & WORKERS North Avenue New Delhi-  
11008

Ref: Confd. Circular/2024 Dated – 30.08.2024

### CIRCULAR

To

All Office Bearers/National Executive Members,

All General Secretaries of State COCs.

All Chief Executive of affiliated Organizations

Dear Comrades,

The meeting of core committee of women's Wing of Confederation of Central Government Employees and Worker's was held on 24.8.24 at ITEF HQ Rajouri Garden, under the chairmanship of Com. Manisha Mazumdar chairperson of Mahila subcommittee. Com. Rupak Sarkar President, Com. Tapas Bose working President and Com. S B Yadav SG of Confederation also attended the meeting. 11 Delegates from 6 CoC attended the core committee meeting.

The meeting started with observing one minutes silence to pay Homage to Martyr's. Com. Rupak Sarkar President Confederation briefed the purpose for which the meeting of core committee was convened, the National women's conventions are overdue and has to be Organised. This meeting is to work out the details of holding the said conventions. The SG Confederation explained in detail about the agitation conducted and on the core issues on which further struggles had to be continued.

Com. Sushila Rani, Vice President of Confederation informed that the AP& Telangana COC is ready to hold the National Women's Convention at Vijayawada in the month of November 24. After threadbare discussion amongst the Delegates, the following decisions were unanimously arrived:

1. National women's conventions will be held at Murali Resorts, Vijayawada from 22.11.24 to 23.11.24.

2. Reception Committee was constituted as

A) Com. Lakshana Rao MLC (Graduate Constituency) as Chairman and Com. Sreedhar Babu Convenor NFPE AP circle would be working Chairman.

B) Com. Subhakar and Com. Puna Reddy of ITEF

Vijayawada will be Convenor and Co- Convenor of Reception Committee, respectively.

3. Names of speakers for open session were finalised.

4. Venue will be in the name of late Com. Seeta Lakshmi ex GS P4 NFPE & ex chairperson of mahila subcommittee of Confederation.

5. Delegate Fee was fixed as ? 1500/- (Rs. One thousand five hundred) only.

6. Cultural program to be Organised on first day evening.

7. Com. Prameela from Kerala coc requested to extend some financial assistance for rehabilitation of affected person's due to natural Calamity at Wayanad, it was decided to donate from Mahila Sub Committee by collecting money at Convention to CMDRF Kerala.

The quota of number of Delegates for each CoC were decided as mentioned below:

West Bengal CoC. ....30

Kerala CoC. . . ....30

Ap & Telengana. ....30

Tamil Nadu coc. ....15

Mumbai CoC. ....15

All other COCs have been allotted 10 Delegates, each. In addition to these if affiliates of Confederation can send Delegates may decide and convey to the reception committee.

Com. Manisha Mazumdar chairperson, summed up the discussion and proposed the Vote of thanks.

Comradely yours's

(S B Yadav)

Secretary General

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### JCM NEWS

No.NC/JCM/2024

Dated: August 24, 2024

All Constituent Organizations,  
National Council (JCM)

Dear Comrades,



**Sub: Brief of the held meeting held today between the Standing Committee Members of the National Council (JCM) and Hon'ble Prime Minister of India**

A meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Council (JCM) held today with Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, at his residence, wherein Hon'ble Finance Minister, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman and Shri T.V. Somanathan, Chairman of the Committee constituted to review Pension System for Government Employees and designated Cabinet Secretary, were also present.

In the said meeting; Hon'ble Prime Minister and Cabinet Minister approved the Unified Pension Scheme(UPS), the salient features of which are as under:-

- (i) **Assured Pension** - 50% of the average basic pay drawn over the last 12 months prior to superannuation for a minimum qualifying service of 25 years. This pay is to be proportionate for lesser service period up to a minimum of 10 years of service.
- (ii) **Assured Family Pension @ 60%** of pension of the employee immediately before her/his demise.
- (iii) **Assured Minimum Pension @ 10,000** per month on superannuation after minimum 10 years of service.
- (iv) **Inflation Indexation** on Assured Pension on Assured Family Pension and Assured Minimum Pension **Dearness Relief**, based on All India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers(AICPI-IW), as in case of service employees.
- (v) Lump sum payment at superannuation in addition to gratuity 1/10th of monthly emoluments (pay + DA) as on the date of superannuation for every completed six months of service this payment will not reduce the quantum of assured pension

While congratulating all of you on our great achievement, I admire your struggle.

Comradely yours,  
(Shiva Gopal Mishra)  
General Secretary

o0o

**SERVICE MATTERS**

F.No. A-240n/5/2024-ESTT-Leave  
Government of India Ministry of Personnel,  
Public Grievances and Pensions  
Department of Personnel & Training  
Old JNU Campus, New Delhi 110 067  
Dated: 29.07.2024

**OFFICE MEMORANDUM**

**Subject: Instructions for conferring the power to relax the spells of Child Care Leave to the Leave Sanctioning Authority in the Ministries and Departments under the Government of India - regarding.**

This Department has been considering relaxation of the spells of Child Care Leave, admissible under Rule 43-C(3)(i) of the CCS (Leave) Rules 1972, to female Central Government employees and single male Central Government employees in case of medical treatment of the child, in public interest, in consultation with Department of Expenditure and National Council (JCM).

2. As a welfare measure, it has now been decided that, the leave sanctioning authorities in the Ministries or Departments under the Government of India are bestowed with the power to relax up to a maximum of three spells beyond the existing three spells of Child Care Leave in a calendar year, under Rule 43-C(3)(i) of the CCS (Leave) Rules 1972, to female Central Government employees and single male Central Government employees in case their child is admitted in a hospital as inpatient.

3. These orders shall be effective from the date of issuance of this Memorandum.

(J. S. Kanth)

Under Secretary to the Govt, of India

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FNO.5-36/CGHS (HO/HEC2024)  
Office of the Additional Director  
Central Government Health Scheme, Headquarter  
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare,  
Govt of India (Hospital Empanelment Cel)





CGHS Bhawan, Sector - 13, R. K. Puram,  
New Delhi 110066. Dated 05Aug 2024

SEPTEMBER- 2024

### NOTIFICATION

**Sub: Reiteration of the guidelines issued by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, CGHS and Dte. General of Health Services.**

With reference to the above mentioned subject the undersigned is directed to draw attention to the terms and conditions of empanelment under CGHS and to reiterate that the Hospitals, Diagnostic/ Imaging, Eye and Dental centres empanelled under CGHS shall provide better services to the CGHS beneficiaries, the following instructions are to be followed strictly by all HCOs empanelled under CGHS DelhiNCR, failing which necessary action will be initiated in accordance with the MoA.

1. Cashless CGHS facility is obligatory for Pensioners, Ex-Members of Parliament, Sitting Members of Parliament, Freedom Fighters, Serving CGHS/DGHS / Ministry of H&FW employees and there is no any provision to take advance Deposit / Payment at the time of admission.
2. Do not charge the beneficiaries separately for infection control. It is essential for the HCOs to maintain infection control.
3. Do not demand a photocopy of the CGHS card from the CGHS beneficiaries. The CGHS card can be verified from CGHS app or Digilocker.
4. Hospitalized beneficiaries and emergencies do not require any separate permission letter.
5. The stamp is not mandatory on the referral memo.
6. Prescriptions must be given in a printed form always.
7. Prescriptions should strictly adhere to the government's policy by being in a generic format.
8. Dietary supplements/Cosmetic items should not be included in the prescription.
9. Establish a dedicated CGHS Kiosk (Help desk).
10. Ensure that the name of the nodal officer and contact number are prominently displayed. Any changes to the nodal officer must be immediately

communicated to this office.

11. CGHS beneficiaries aged 70 years and above shall be permitted to seek direct OPD Consultation from Specialists of hospitals empanelled under CGHS without referral from CGHS Wellness Centre. The term and condition remain same, mentioned in OM dated 29.05.2019 and 28.06.2024.

12. The HCO shall retain a scanned copy of the print out of the referral and return the original print out to the beneficiary.

13. Retired Air India employees with valid CGHS cards are eligible for cashless treatment at all CGHS empanelled Health Care Organizations (HCOs) and their bills are to be processed through UTI ITSL Portal. To;

14. CS (MA) beneficiaries and their dependent family members can get treatment at CGHS rates from any of the HCOs recognized under CGHS.

15. Bills to be verified and signed by the Pensioners beneficiaries at the time of discharge. The same shall be uploaded on NHA portal.

16. The guidelines issued by OM dated 28.06.2024 stated at point B (i) applicable to Hospitals, Dental and Eye Care Centre only. In case CGHS beneficiary wants to get the test done in any other empanelled Diagnostics / Imaging Centers, then the test prescribed / advised by the Specialist of Pvt, Empanelled HCOs must be endorsed by the CGHS Wellness Centre.

In case of any complaint regarding excess billing / advance payment / harassment of CGHS beneficiaries is received in this office, necessary action will be initiated as per MoA.

(Dr. Honnamma)

Additional Director, CGHS (H)

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F.No. A s8020/6/2023-Ad.VI(A)

Government of India Ministry of Finance

Department of Revenue (Central Board of Direct Taxes)

New Delhi, 27th August, 2024

To

All the Pr. cctT's/Pr. DGIT'S/DG. (HBD)





SEPTEMBER- 2024

**Subject: Coverage under Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, in place of National Pension System. of those Central Government employees who were recruited against the posts/vacancies advertised/notified, or recruitment on or before 22.12.2003.**

Sir/N/adam.

I am directed to refer to above cited subject and to say that Department of Pension and Pensioners Welfare vide O[4 No. 57105/2021-P&PW (B) dated 03.03.2023 has stated that in all cases where the Central Government civil employees have been appointed against a post or vacancy which was advertised/notified for recruitment/ appointment prior to the date of notification for National Pension System i.e 22.12.2003 and is covered under National Pension System on joining service on or after 01.01.2004. may be given a one-time option to be covered under CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972 (now 2021). The option exercised by IRS(IT) officers were placed before their Appointing Authority, and with the approval, eligible IRS officers were considered for allowing them to be covered under CCS (Pension) Rules '1972 (now 2021) in place of National Pension System.

2. Among all officers, some had rendered their services in various State Govt/Bailways before joining IRS (IT), and after tendering technical resignation from their previous services after 01.01.2004. they had joined in Central Government. After counting their past services for service benefit in the light of DoP&T OM No.28020/t/2010-Estt. (c) dated 17.8.2016, those officers were allowed for coverage under CCS(Pension) Rules, 1972 (now 2021) in terms of DoP&PW OM dated 03.03.2023. All of these officers were recruited in their previous services against the vacancies which were notified/advertised before the date of notification of National Pension System i.e 22.12.2003.

3. DoP&PW vide OM No. 5713/2022-P&PW 18)/ 8361(2) dated 20.10.2023 has clarified that the instruction issued vide OM dated 03.03.2023 are applicable to Central Government Civil employees. Central Government employees who are included under CCS(Pension) Rules, 1972 in terms of O[4 dated

03.03.2023 for their appointment against any posts/services in Central Government and moved to another Central Government through proper channel would continue to be governed under CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972. However the case of employees of the State Government/autonomous bodies moving to Central Government services on or after 01.01.2024 after tendering technical resignation from their previous services would be examined as a case of counting of past service on mobility to Central Government service on or after 01.01.2024. Therefore these cases would be examined in terms of Department's OI/ dated 28.10.2009.

4. Accordingly, Board has considered all the cases of IRS officers who rendered their previous services in State Govt./autonomous bodies, for further course of action, in which reply is still awaited.

5. In view of above, all the addressees are advised that, if the GPF account of above mentioned category of IRS officers has not been opened, till now, may continue in previous arrangement i.e National Pension System. However, if in any case(s), it has been opened, it is advised that they may continue in CCS (Pension) Rules, '1972 (now 2021), till any further orders from Board to the contrary.

6. This issues with the approval of Competent Authority.

7. Data Base Cell for uploading on 'irs-officeronline'

Your faithfully  
(Nirin . Mane)

Under Secretary to the Govt. of India  
oOo

F.No. G-27052/01/2024-Cash  
Government of India Ministry of Personnel,  
PG and Pensions Department of Personnel  
and Training .North Block, New Delhi .  
Dated the 13th August, 2024

**Office Memorandum**

**Subject:- Revision of monetary ceiling for purchase/ reimbursement of briefcase/ official bag/ ladies purses - regarding.**



The undersigned is directed to refer to above subject and to state that the Competent Authority has decided to revise the monetary ceiling for purchase/ reimbursement of briefcase/ official bag/ ladies purses as under:-

Sr.no.	Level of officers/officials	Existing limit (in Rs.) inclusive of GST	Revised limit (in Rs.) inclusive of GST	Period
1.	Secretary/Special Secretary and equivalent (Level 17)	10000	12500	Once in 3 years (from the date of the invoice related to purchase)
2.	Addl. Secretary or equivalent (Level 15)	8000	10000	-do-
3.	Joint Secretary or equivalent (Level 14)	6500	8125	-do-
4.	Director/Dy. Secy./Sr. PPS or equivalent (Level 12-13)	5000	6250	-do-
5.	Under Secretary/PPS or equivalent (Level 11)	4000	5000	-do-
6.	Section Officer/PS or equivalent (Level 8-10)	4000	5000	-do-
7.	Assistant Section Officer/PA/ SSA/ Steno (NFSG) or equivalent (Level 6-7)	3500	4375	-do-

2. The entitled officers/ officials can purchase briefcase/ office bags/ ladies purses of their **own** choice from any private/ public outlet. However, reimbursement shall be restricted to the above mentioned ceiling limits

3. The briefcase/ office bag/ ladies purse shall be provided to the above officers/ officials on joining **this** ministry or on completion of three years from the date of issue of **earlier** one.

4. This issues with the concurrence of Integrated Finance Division (IFD) of this Department vide Comp. No. 3187536 dated 8.8.2024.

5. The above **revised** ceiling will be effective from the date of **issue**.

(S.P. Singh)

Under Secretary to the Govt. of India

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F.No.Misc.2011/103/NHA ISSUES/2023

(comp.No 8289407)

Office of the Director Directorate of CGHS

CGHS Bhawan, R K Puram Sector-13

New Delhi - 110066 Dated 2/9/2024

#### OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Regarding the CGHS referral OM Z.15025/19/2024/DIR/CGHS/EHS, Comp No. 8281286) dated June 28, 2024, the directorate has received several queries

seeking clarification on various clauses of the OM

In response to inquiries regarding various clauses within the aforementioned OM, a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been developed. This SOP aims to:

**Enhance understanding:** Provide a clear explanation of the OM's contents.

**Standardize bill uploads:** Ensure uniformity in uploading medical bills to the TMS portal.

All HCOs are required to adhere to the guidelines outlined in the attached SOP when handling referrals and uploading bills to the TMS portal. The SOP comes into effect from the date of issue of this OM.

Dr.Satheesh Y.H

Director, CGHS.

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No.DOPT-1721625311004

Government of India Ministry of Personnel,

Public Grievances & Pensions

Department of Personnel and Training

ESTT.(Estt. D) Dated 22 July, 2024

#### OFFICE MEMORANDUM

**Subject:- Guidelines on Departmental Promotion Committees**

Note : While due care has been taken to compile this document, however, if any omissions or correction are noticed, the same may be brought to the notice of the Department of Personnel & Training.

#### 1.FUNCTIONS AND COMPOSITION OF DEPARTMENTAL PROMOTION COMMITTEES (DPCs)

1.1 A post is filled on promotion basis where the Recruitment Rules so provide as a method of recruitment. In making promotions, it should be ensured that suitability of the candidates for promotion is considered in an objective and impartial manner. For this purpose, Departmental Promotion Committee [DPC] (for considering Promotion) should be formed in each Ministry/ Department/ Organisation. In addition, for considering cases of confirmation Departmental Confirmation Committee [DCC] needs



to be constituted. Thus, whenever an occasion arises for making promotions/ confirmation etc., the DPCs/ DCCs so constituted shall judge the suitability of officers for :

(a) 'Promotion' to 'Selection' as well as 'Non-Selection' posts.

(b) Appointment of existing incumbent(s) to post(s) which has(have) been upgraded, in the event of upgradation of post(s) held by the officer(s), in accordance with provisions of DoPT O.M. No. 22011/ 10/ 84-Estt (D) dated 04.02.1992 and O.M. No. AB-14017/66/2008-Estt.(RR) dated 09.03.2009.

(c) Confirmation of direct recruits in their respective entry grades/posts, confirmation of those promoted in case of change of Group on Promotion or confirmation for officers re-employed before the age of superannuation (by the Departmental Confirmation Committee).

(d) Assessment of work and conduct of the probationers for the purpose of determining their suitability for retention in service or their discharge from it or extending their probation.

[O.M. No. 22011/5/86-Estt.(D) dated 10.04.1989

O.M.No.22011/10/84-Estt(D)dated 04.02.1992

O.M. No. AB-14017/66/2008-Estt.(RR) dated 09.03.2009 and O.M. No. 28020/3/2018-Estt.(C) dated 11.03.2019]

## **1.2 Composition of DPC for Group 'A' and Group 'B' posts**

1.2.1 Members included in DPCs for Group 'A' and Group 'B' posts should be officers who are at least one level above the posts in which promotion/ confirmation is to be made. A nominee of Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT) shall also be associated with the DPCs in respect of posts covered by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) delegation, as prescribed vide DoPT O.M. No. 22012/ 5/97-Estt (D) dated 12.01.1998.

[O.M. No. 22011/5/86-Estt.(D) dated 10.04.1989 and O.M. No. 22012/5/97-Estt.(D) dated 12.01.1998]

## **1.3 Association of UPSC with DPCs/DCCs**

### **1.3.1 Cases of promotion:**

In cases of promotion by Selection, it shall

not be necessary to associate the Union Public Service Commission while making a promotion to any Group 'A' Service or post the maximum of the scale of pay of which is less than Rs.16500 (less than Pay Level 12), of an officer holding any Group 'A' service or post. Consultation with UPSC shall continue to be necessary while considering promotion from Group 'B' to any level in Group 'A'.

Whenever the UPSC is associated with a DPC, the Chairman or a Member of the Commission will preside at the meeting of the DPC. [Notification No. 39018/1/98-Estt.(B) dated 21.05.1999]

Notification No. 39018/01/98-Estt.(B) dated 04.12.2003 and

Para 2.4 of O.M. No. 22011/5/86-Estt.(D) dated 10.04.1989]

### **1.3.2 Cases of confirmation**

It shall not be necessary to consult the UPSC while making substantive appointment or confirmation to any Group 'A' or Group 'B' Service or post, of any person recruited directly through the UPSC to such Group 'A' or Group 'B' Service or post.

[Notification No. 39018/1/98-Estt.(B) dated 21.05.1999]

### **1.3.3 Composition of DPC for Group 'C' posts**

In respect of a DPC for Group C posts the Chairman of the DPC should be an officer of a sufficiently high level and one of the members of the DPC should be an officer from a Department not connected with the one in which promotions are considered. The other member(s) should be an officer of the Department familiar with the work of the persons whose suitability is to be assessed. The officer of another Department appointed as a member of the DPC should also be of an appropriate level keeping in view the level of the other members of the DPC and the post to which promotion is to be made. In the case of a DPC constituted for promotions to a technical post it may also be ensured that the officer nominated by another Department has also the requisite technical competence to advise on the suitability of the candidates under consideration.



[Para 2.5 of O.M. NO. 22011/5/86-Estt.(D) dated 10.04.1989]

### 1.3.4 Co-option of SC/ST officers as Members of DPC

(a) Endeavour should also be made to nominate an SC/ST officer on the DPC constituted for various posts/ services particularly where a DPC has to make bulk selection for a large number of vacancies, say 30 or more at a time. Where an outside member has to be associated with the DPC for Group C posts, there would be no objection to nominate on such a DPC, a SC/ST officer from such other Ministry/Department in the event of such officer not being available in the Ministry/Department itself.

(b) In Group A and Group B Services/posts if none of the officers included in the DPC as per the composition given in the recruitment rules is a SC or ST officer, it would be in order to co-opt a member belonging to the SC or ST if available within the Ministry/Department. If no such officer is available within the Ministry/ Department, he may be taken from another Ministry/ Department. O.M. No. F.16/1/74-Estt.(SCT) dated 23.05.1975, O.M. No. 41013/16/80-Estt.(SCT) dated 10.08.1981, O.M. No. 36011/22/82-Estt.(SCT) dated 18.08.1983 and Para 2.6 and 2.7 of O.M. NO. 22011/5/86-Estt.(D) dated 10.04.1989]

## 2. FREQUENCY OF DEPARTMENTAL PROMOTIONAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

### 2.1 Frequency at which DPC should meet and suggested model calendar for holding of DPCs

2.1.1 The DPCs should be convened at regular annual intervals to draw panels, which could be utilized for making promotions against the vacancies occurring during the course of the vacancy year. From the year 2018 onwards, Vacancy Year stands shifted to Calendar Year. Accordingly from 2019 onwards, the crucial date for determining eligibility shall be the 1st of January of the Vacancy Year.

2.1.2 For timely convening of DPC it is essential for the concerned Ministry/ Department/Office/cadre authorities to take timely action for collecting all relevant documents, convening the DPC and seeking

approval of the appointing authority. Ideally an officer should be identified as the nodal officer for ensuring timely convening of the DPC. For Gr. A Services/ posts, Joint Secretary (Admn) of the administrative Department/ or Joint Secretary in charge of the cadre concerned may be designated as the nodal officer. For other services/posts, Administrative Ministry may similarly identify nodal officers of equivalent level for the purpose.

2.1.3 A model Calendar as prescribed below may be followed so that it could be ensured that the select panel is ready before the commencement of the vacancy year. For practical reasons, a separate time-schedule for cases requiring approval of the Appointments Committee of Cabinet and cases, which do not require such approval, has been suggested.

## MODEL CALENDAR FOR CONDUCTING DEPARTMENTAL PROMOTION COMMITTEES(DPCs)

### A. ACC Cases

Sl.No.	Events	Timeline
1.	Crucial date for determining eligibility	1 <sup>st</sup> January of the Vacancy Year
2.	Compilation of ACRs (APARs)/ Vigilance Clearance/ Seniority List/ Penalty and Vacancy position etc., and forwarding DPC proposal to UPSC	January - to 15 <sup>th</sup> April of the year preceding the vacancy year
3.	Last date for sending complete proposal along with relevant Recruitment / Service Rules to the UPSC. (Efforts should be made to send the proposal to the UPSC as soon as possible without waiting for the last date)	15 <sup>th</sup> April of the year preceding the vacancy year
4.	DPC to be held	15 <sup>th</sup> April - August of the year preceding the vacancy year
5.	On receipt of DPC minutes from the UPSC, post-DPC follow-up action by the administrative Ministry/ Department	September of the year preceding the vacancy year
6.	Approval of the ACC including communication of its approval to the administrative Ministry/ Department	October - December of the year preceding the vacancy year
7.	Last date for getting ready the approved select panel by the administrative Ministry / Department	31 <sup>st</sup> December of the year preceding the vacancy year

Note : Dates/periods suggested in the Model Calendar for DPCs put no bar on earlier completion of various



pre-post DPC related actions. Every effort may, as such, be made for taking speedy action in the matter without waiting for the last date or completion of the period as suggested by the Model Calendar for DPCs.

## B. Non-ACC Cases

Sl.No.	Events	Timeline
1.	Crucial date for determining eligibility	1 <sup>st</sup> January of the Vacancy Year
2.	Compilation of ACRs (APARs) / Vigilance Clearance/ Seniority List/Penalty and Vacancy position etc., and forwarding DPC proposal	January - April of the year preceding the vacancy year
3.	Last date for sending complete proposal along with relevant Recruitment / Service Rules to the DPC. (Efforts should be made to send the proposal to the UPSC as soon as possible without waiting for the last date)	30 <sup>th</sup> April of the year preceding the vacancy year
4.	DPC to be held	May - October of the year preceding the vacancy year
5.	On receipt of DPC minutes, post-DPC follow-up action (including approval of the Competent Authority) by the administrative Ministry/ Department	November - December the year preceding the vacancy year
6.	Last date for getting ready the approved select panel by the administrative Ministry / Department	31 <sup>st</sup> December of the year preceding the vacancy year

Note: Dates/periods suggested in the Model Calendar for DPCs put no bar on earlier completion of various pre-post DPC related actions. Every effort may, as such, be made for taking speedy action in the matter without waiting for the last date or completion of the period as suggested by the Model Calendar for DPCs.

[Para 3.1 of O.M. No. 22011/5/86-Estt.(D) dated 10.04.1989, O.M. No. 22011/3/2011-Est.(D) dated 24.03.2011 and O.M. No. 22011/4/2013-Estt.(D) dated 08.05.2017]

### 2.2 Recruitment Rules at the time of occurrence of vacancy to be adopted

2.2.1 Holding of DPC meetings need not be delayed or postponed merely on the ground that recruitment rules for a post are being reviewed/amended. A vacancy shall be filled in accordance with the recruitment rules in force as on the date of vacancy, unless rules made subsequently have been given retrospective effect. Since amendments to recruitment rules normally have only prospective application, the existing vacancies

should be filled as per the recruitment rules in force. Para 3.1 of O.M. NO. 22011/5/86-Estt.(D) dated 10.04.1989]

### 2.3 Non-holding of the regular DPC for valid reasons

2.3.1 The requirement of convening annual meetings of the DPC/DCC should be dispensed with only after a certificate has been issued by the appointing authority that there are no vacancies to be filled by promotion or no officers are due for confirmation during the year in question.

[Para 3.2 of O.M. NO. 22011/5/86-Estt.(D) dated 10.04.1989]

### 3. PREPARATORY ACTION FOR HOLDING DPCs

#### 3.1 Determination of regular vacancies and size of the select panel.

3.1.1 It is essential that the number of vacancies in respect of which a panel is to be prepared by a DPC should be estimated as accurately as possible. For this purpose since action is to be initiated in advance, the vacancies to be taken into account should be clear vacancies arising in a post/grade/service in the relevant vacancy year due to retirement, regular long term promotion and deputation. As regards vacancies arising out of deputation, only those cases of deputation for periods exceeding one year should be taken into account, due note, however being kept also of the number of the deputationists likely to return to the cadre and who have to be provided for. Purely short term vacancies created as a result of officers proceeding on leave, or on deputation for a shorter period, training etc. should not be taken into account for the purpose of preparation of a panel. In cases where there has been delay in holding DPCs for a year or more, vacancies should be indicated year-wise separately. [Para 4.1 of O.M. NO. 22011/5/86-Estt.(D) dated 10.04.1989]

3.1.2 DPC for a grade may take into account all clear expected vacancies by retirement etc. in the concerned grade as well as chain vacancies on account of retirement etc. in the higher grades which can be clearly anticipated in the same vacancy year.



[Para 7 of O.M. No. 22011/9/98-Estt.(D) dated 08.09.1998]

3.1.3 Chain Vacancies on account of retirement, etc. in the higher grades in a vacancy (panel) year shall include :

The vacancies which can be clearly anticipated as likely to become available in the concerned grade by promotion of officers of the service to higher grades during that vacancy (panel) year. (Expected promotion to the higher grades under the Model Calendar for DPCs would normally be against vacancies arising by retirement in all the higher grades/hierarchy - as per paragraph 7 of the Office Memorandum dated September 8, 1998).

[Para 2 of O.M. No. 22011/9/98-Estt.(D) dated 06.10.1999]

[For vacancies that arise subsequently during the vacancy year due to death, resignation, creation of new posts, a supplementary DPC needs to be convened.]

### 3.2 Papers to be put up for consideration by the DPCs

The proposals for promotion / confirmation to be submitted to the DPC/ DCC/ UPSC should be complete in all respects and should be sent in good time before the meeting.

[Para 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 of O.M. NO. 22011/5/86-Estt.(D) dated 10.04.1989]

#### 3.2.1 Annual Performance Appraisal Reports (APARs)

(i) No proposal for holding meeting of the DPC or Selection Committee should be sent to the Committee or UPSC until and unless all the APARs complete and upto-date are available. In certain case involving collection of a large number of APARs, the proposal can be sent only if at least 90% of the APARs reckonable for the vacancy year concerned are available. Every effort should be made to keep the APARs dossiers upto date, lest this aspect is advanced as the reason for not holding the DPCs in time. [Para 4.2.3 of O.M. NO. 22011/5/86-Estt.(D) dated 10.04.1989]

(ii) If the APAR for a particular year/period is

not available and for valid/ justifiable reasons it cannot be made available, a certificate (No Report Certificate) should be recorded to that effect and placed in the respective APAR dossier.

[Para 4.2.4 of O.M. NO. 22011/5/86-Estt.(D) dated 10.04.1989]

(iii) Where the UPSC is associated with the DPC, the certificate will be recorded by an officer not below the rank of a Deputy Secretary to the Government. Where UPSC is not associated, the officer in-charge of the Administration Section in the Ministry / Department / Office concerned, who processes and submits names and particulars of eligible officers to the DPC should himself record the certificate.

[Para 4.2.6 of O.M. NO. 22011/5/86-Estt.(D) dated 10.04.1989]

(iv) It should be ensured that the information furnished to the UPSC/DPC is factually correct and complete in all respects. Cases where incorrect information have been furnished should be investigated and suitable action taken against the person responsible for it.

[Para 4.2.7 of O.M. NO. 22011/5/86-Estt.(D) dated 10.04.1989]

to be continued in next issue.....

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## CIRCLE NEWS

Income Tax Employees Federation, Tamilnadu& Puducherry circle organized a trade union camp on 2<sup>nd</sup>&03<sup>rd</sup> August, 2024 at Salem. Around 300 young comrades including executive committee members, who covered under NPS actively participated in the camp. Com.K Swaminathan from AIIEA, Com.Ravindran Nair, Ex-President of ITEF, Com.M Santhanam, Sr Leader of ITEF and G Janban, General Secretary, ITGOA along with Office bearers of ITEF TN & Puducherry Circle enriched all participants.

In the last, all the faculties' members were felicitated by Com.Shyamnath, President of the Circle. Com. M S Vengatesan, President of ITEF and General Secretary of the Circle proposed vote of thanks.

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## FROM THE PRESS

### **Growth matrix: On the economy's performance Economic outlook is evenly poised but reforms need acceleration**

The first official gauge of the economy's performance so far in 2024-25 pegs real GDP growth at 6.7% between April and June, a five-quarter low and below the central bank's projection. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which expects a 7.2% GDP growth through 2024-25 following last year's 8.2% surge, had revised its estimate for Q1 from 7.2% to 7.1%, earlier this month. The actual numbers are underwhelming and mark a clear cooling in the economic momentum, although some base effects are in play. Growth in the Gross Value Added (GVA) in the economy came in higher at 6.8%, after a year of widening divergences with the GDP print. At the onset of this fiscal year, major hopes hinged on a normal monsoon boosting farm sector output and easing inflation, which could lift the weak rural demand and private consumption witnessed last year. Higher demand would bolster private firms' propensity to invest in new capacities, and ease the pressure on public spending to prop up growth. That the government would still ramp up capital expenditure by 17% to <sup>1</sup> 11.11 lakh crore this year, while it waited for this narrative to unfold, was the other pillar underpinning this year's growth aspirations.

As things stand, this script is yet to fully play out. The stretched general election has sharply scuppered public capex, and the government will need to redouble efforts to meet its spending goals. The good news is that private consumption spends bounced to a six-quarter peak of 7.4%, partly thanks to easing headline inflation. But food prices remain elevated. The monsoon has been better than last year but a tad erratic and uneven, temporally as well as spatially. Farm GVA growth has moved up to a four quarter high of 2% but the next few weeks will determine whether the sector rebounds in earnest (and food inflation cools). Projections of above normal downpours in September may well affect standing kharif

crops. This is a key monitorable for the RBI, whose independent monetary policy panel members have flagged a 1% GDP growth loss this year and next, if interest rate cuts are delayed. India may still grow 6.5% to 7% this year, but most expect growth to slip to 6.5% in 2025-26, with the medium-term potential hovering around that number. This is too slow for comfort. As top IMF official Gita Gopinath pointed out recently, policymakers need to urgently pursue meaningful reforms across all aspects of the economy, and improve the efficiency of its institutions and the judiciary. This is critical to lift its growth potential and fulfil hopes of creating gainful employment for its young, fast enough for India's demographics to yield a dividend.

### **By another name: On misleading advertisements, fake medicine - Courts should act against fake medicine, not just control advertising**

On August 27, a Bench of the Supreme Court of India found itself reaching, once again, for idioms over a matter involving misleading advertisements of ayurveda, siddha, and unani products. Earlier this year, another Bench had concluded proceedings against Patanjali Ayurved over its defiance of an order to not publicise unproven or unprovable medicinal claims attached to its products. Towards the end of that matter, various State-level regulatory agencies were finally roused to act against Patanjali Ayurved over these claims while the Court ordered it to publish media advertisements apologising for its actions. While the responses of the State bodies to the company are still evolving, the Court's own verdict seemed to embody a belief that nothing more could be done and this belief casts the Court's current ire against the Ministry of AYUSH in a particular light. India's drug manufacturers and regulators are caught between ensuring high quality, which leads to higher manufacturing costs, while keeping consumer prices down so that patients can access the drugs they need. Unfortunately, neither regulators nor manufacturers have navigated this tension in the patients' favour. The AYUSH Ministry's actions have further complicated this scenario by allowing businesses to register all sorts of products as "Ayurvedic" (as illustrated in the case of its licence, and later cancelled, to a Bengaluru-based company





to sell milk as “Ayurvedic proprietary medicine”) and by attempting to evade existing quality rules, presumably to grease the wheels of businesses.

With the Ministry’s cynical attempt now to sidestep Rule 170 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules 1945, which penalises misleading advertisements of ayurveda, siddha, and unani products, the Court confronts an old tendency in a new disguise. Public apologies and post facto action by regulatory bodies may have been the end of the line against one company. The Court may also seem sated by a demand, as it spelled out in its May 7 order, that all advertisers self-declare that they will not publish misleading advertisements. But similar concessionary measures will falter against a Ministry. Medicine quality and manufacturer inspections are disuniform, more so in the alternative medicines space, and regulating advertisements has emerged as a last-ditch backstop against bad products entering the market. In the face of progressively weakening protections against what is ultimately fake medicine, the most preferred outcome in the present matter would be for the Court to look at past declarations — self-made or otherwise — and into rectifying the quality-control regime, particularly to empower it, protect it from political capture, and bring alternative medicines under its purview.

### **Biotech enigma: On the BioE3 proposal and beyond**

#### **Biotechnology initiatives need long-term capital investments**

Earlier this week the Cabinet cleared a proposal, though without specifying a budget, called BioE3 or Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment. Its thrust is to boost manufacturing in the biotechnology sector. Since 1986, India has had a dedicated department for biotechnology, and which deserves substantial credit. For instance, the progress in vaccine development, diagnostics and biologicals, that has bolstered India’s reputation as a ‘vaccine factory’, is due to the initiatives of this department. However, biotechnology did not quite spawn the equivalent of the IT revolution. There is much more to an industrialised biotechnology sector beyond

vaccines. There are billion-dollar conglomerates today that rest on high-value microbes gene-modification technologies, bio-plastics, bio-materials, and high-precision medical devices. However, despite the know-how and human resource capital, only a few Indian biotechs have global resonance, as there are few local manufacturers who can supply Indian laboratories/ startups with the ingredients and devices to make products. The reliance on imports means that India loses its international competitiveness. The BioE3 policy aims to correct this.

In the last four decades, India has funded biotech research institutions but now sees that it needs to be going beyond and setting up companies, in public private partnership mode, to bolster biotechnology manufacturing. There are six verticals that this initiative envisages: bio-based chemicals and enzymes; functional foods and smart proteins; precision biotherapeutics; climate-resilient agriculture; carbon capture, and futuristic marine and space research. Futurists have been saying that the era of fossil-fuel industrialisation is over and humanity will have to rely on the natural world — for food and for making consumer products. This is to solve the global problem of non- biodegradable waste and carbon emissions. Future industries must be grounded in environmentally benign products, and this is impossible without sophisticated biotechnology. By setting up bio-foundries and bio-artificial intelligence hubs, the policy hopes there will be avenues for a variety of biotechnologists to congregate. Well intentioned this may be, but India’s woes with manufacturing have chronic causes. Without establishing enabling grounds for long-term capital investment — and these have little to do with biotechnology per se — top-down initiatives will have limited impact. The BioE3 policy must be a deeply collaborative effort between Centre and States. Rather than expect quick returns, the government must provide financial and infrastructural support over the long term.

### **Middle path: On the Unified Pension Scheme The modified pension scheme overcomes some shortcomings of NPS**



The Centre has restored guaranteed pensions for its employees, meeting their demand halfway, and weakly trying to hold on to principles of fiscal prudence. Pension schemes around the world, whether contributory and market linked or underwritten by the exchequer, are facing a crisis, due to multiple factors, including demographic reasons. According to the Reserve Bank of India, the total Budget estimates of various States and Union Territories for pension in 2023-24 was ₹ 5,22,105.4 crore, which is between 6%-21% of their total revenue receipts. Pensioners argue that it is their deferred wages. It can also be argued that pensions from the exchequer are at the cost of future generations. Governments are outsourcing jobs through contracts, and resorting to innovations such as Agnipath — a short service scheme for the military services — and the ballooning of pension bills is among the reasons that drive such measures. Governments are also leaving posts unfilled. All such measures are leading to two things. First, it negatively affects state capacity, and second, it reduces avenues for government and public sector jobs for India's expanding number of young job seekers. The New Pension Scheme (NPS), which was market-linked and managed by an autonomous entity, was introduced during the stock market boom. Two decades later, when people began retiring under the NPS — those who joined after January 1, 2004 — it turned out that they were receiving much less than what they would have got under the old scheme.

With the Congress making the restoration of the old scheme a central piece of its politics, the BJP was pushed to the corner. A committee led by former Finance Secretary and Cabinet Secretary-designate T.V. Somanathan devised a middle path that involves employee contributions and enhanced share from the Centre. The Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), approved by the Cabinet, promises a pension of 50% of the average basic pay of the last 12 months before retirement and a minimum pension of ₹ 10,000 for those who worked for at least 10 years. The Centre's share towards the scheme was increased from 14% under the NPS to 18.5%, which Prime

Minister Narendra Modi has said will ensure government employees dignity and financial security. The BJP and the government should note that no reform can be sustainable without broad political consensus. Social security for older people must cover the widest segment of the population. Government employees are an organised pressure group, and having managed to restore their guaranteed pension, they should wholeheartedly welcome the UPS, rather than protest against employee contribution.

### **Death at work: On industrial safety**

#### **A safety audit is essential to prevent industrial accidents**

The blast at pharma company Escientia's plant in the Atchutapuram Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Anakapalli district, Andhra Pradesh, is the worst industrial accident in the region in recent times. Seventeen workers have died and many have been injured. On the same day, about 10 workers suffered injuries in a fire accident at a chemical factory in the same SEZ. Last year, on June 30, a massive explosion rocked a pharma plant, at the same SEZ, leading to deaths and injuries. The Atchutapuram SEZ, among the State's largest SEZs, is home to the factories of more than 100 companies. The rash of accidents revives memories of another deadly accident on May 7, 2020 — 12 people died after a styrene monomer vapour leak from a polymers unit at Venkatapuram village on the outskirts of Visakhapatnam. These accidents raise serious questions about the state of industrial safety in Andhra Pradesh, more specifically in the SEZ. State Home Minister V. Anitha has said that at Escientia, workers had tried to plug a solvent leak of the chemical/solvent MTBE (Methyl tert-butyl ether). Before the leak could be plugged, it fell on an electrical panel, leading to a fire and blast, she said. Meanwhile, the typical safety data sheet of MTBE — that operating personnel should have been familiar with — says that it is highly flammable and its vapour can also cause skin and eye irritation. In case of accidental release, it specifically cautions against the serious risk of fire and explosion and lays down the use of explosion-proof electrical/ventilating/lighting equipment.



Trade unions and activists are calling for stringent punishment to lax managements. They also complain of abysmal safety standards. Their demand is for an immediate and thorough safety audit of all units at the SEZs and elsewhere in Andhra Pradesh. A key complaint is exemption from government inspection given to units in SEZs and Export Processing Zones in a 2016 order that brought into force the system of online inspections. This exemption will apparently apply to high-risk ones also, such as pharma and chemicals, in SEZs. Another is exemption from inspections given to medium-risk industries which can self-certify, based on third party audits, regarding compliance with safety norms. Such government moves are intended to facilitate ease- of-doing business as frequent inspections by government staff may only lead to bribes and harassment without necessarily improving safety. While the intent is a well worked out practice across the world, the series of accidents calls for a broader probe including in SEZs in Andhra Pradesh so that any loopholes present can be fixed. Swift delivery of justice by punishing non-compliance of norms and the award of punitive damages will be a deterrent against ignoring safety.

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#### **Pension: UPS offers a good balance**

The newly-announced Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) for central government employees may be a political response of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government to the opposition and setbacks it has faced over the pension issue but, at least on the face of it, seems to offer a good balance between the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) that was extant before 2004 and the National Pension Scheme (NPS) that was ushered in thereafter. In the main, the UPS keeps the employee contribution part of the NPS, while adding the assured pension part of the OPS, with the exchequer ready to contribute to ensure it. The government's contribution to the pension will increase from 14 per cent to 18 per cent, resulting in an additional fiscal burden of Rs 6,250 crore on the Centre. For its employees, the scheme ensures a minimum pension of Rs 10,000 for those who have

served for a minimum of 10 years. At the higher end, employees will receive 50 per cent of the average salary drawn during the last 12 months of their service. These provisions are advantageous for employees, although they do not quite match the benefits offered under the OPS.

Although the unions are sceptical and await the fine print, the move offers the Opposition much to think about. The Congress party has gained traction in some states by promising to bring the OPS back in full. The UPS offers Congress governments a chance to partially fulfil the party's promise and claim moral victory over the BJP while also escaping the long-term burden of generous government-funded pensions such as the OPS. The Eknath Shinde government in Maharashtra has taken the lead to announce the implementation of the UPS, aimed at stealing the Congress' thunder on the issue in the upcoming election. The BJP is likely to follow the same strategy in Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir, which are also headed for elections.

With the average life expectancy in India at about 70 years and rising, the financial burden of pension payouts has risen and successive governments have felt that it could go out of hand in the coming decades. There are instances of pensioners receiving benefits for a period longer than their actual service tenure. As governments worldwide struggle with their pension burdens, the Modi 2.0 government's reflex was to implement measures like the Agniveer scheme, lateral entry, and keeping many posts vacant, merely to reduce the long-term pension burden. The UPS scheme is a vast improvement in terms of the government's response. Perhaps more is to be expected in this direction, including on the Agniveer scheme, as the elections approach. Meanwhile, government employees will do well to keep in mind that they are better off, even with the UPS, in a country where the vast percentage of the population does not have access to any form of pension or social security.

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Com. Sec. General addressed a meeting at Kolkata on Unifield Pension Scheme on 26th August 2024.



Meeting on UPS organised by ITEF Mumai Circle on 30th August 2024.



Trade union camp on 2<sup>nd</sup>& 03<sup>rd</sup> August, 2024 at Salem.





The 15th Delegates' Conference of ITEF Kerala Circle concluded on 24th August, 2024. Com. M S Venkatasen, President, ITEF attended and delivered his valued speech in the Conference. Com. Biju P A and Com. Binoop A re-elected as President and General Secretary of the Kerala Circle.



Meeting with the Chairman at Bhopal

