

Enable longer work hours: CII to Centre

Also seeks norms for workers to rejoin duty; 'make those failing to report for work liable for action'

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The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has recommended that the government issue guidelines directing direct workers to rejoin duty. Those failing to report for work must be made liable for action under the Employment Standing Order Act and the Industrial Dispute Act.

The recommendation, along with several more, were made at a meeting between CII representatives and Labour and Employment Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar on Friday.

"The Ministry of Labour and Employment [must issue a circular/guideline] to direct workers to join back at their workplace. In case workers do not report back, they should be liable for action under the Employment Standing Order Act and Industrial Dispute Act," the re-



Near and dear: Workers residing in shelters or near industrial belts may assigned to the nearest factories. • VIJAY SONEJI

commendations stated. It added that States needed to put the revision of minimum wages on hold for at least one year and that normal working hours of employees across sectors are increased by allowing four hours overtime per day. "For working overtime, workers would be paid in proportion to the normal wages. The workers'

consent has to be taken for the overtime," it said.

Additionally, to address the shortage of workforce, the CII has suggested that migrant workers residing in shelter homes or available locally near the industrial belts be mapped and deployed to the nearest factories. The industry body has also recommended that the

provisions of layoff under the Industrial Dispute Act be extended to commercial establishments as a job retention measure for workers having no work. "For the period of layoff, such workers shall remain on rolls and will get reduced wages along with statutory benefits such as ESIC and PF."

"... to allow industry to pay wages as per the layoff (50% basic plus DA) provisions for the period no work is carried out for the month of April and May 2020," it said. Further, it sought removal of labour advisories issued under the Disaster Management Act that prohibits employers from any wage reduction, layoff and retrenchment of workers.

On review of labour laws, the industry body said it is critical that these changes are not rushed into without addressing industry concerns. "This is especially re-

levant today when the industry is redefining its business models and working practices in many sectors as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Labour codes should be further reviewed to enable greater ease of doing business and encourage entrepreneurship."

The CII added that the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana ought to be extended to more establishments. Currently, the scheme is eligible for wage earners working in establishments employing up to 100 employees, with 90% of employees earning monthly wages less than ₹15,000/pm. "[Extend the scheme to organisations having 50-60% workforce earning up to ₹25,000 p.m.," it said.

It added that Employees' State Insurance Corporation and the EPFO should take up massive campaigns to inform workers to rejoin work.