The Controller of Stores,
All Indian railways and PUs

Sub: Coverage of unenrolled contract employees of Indian Railways under the "Employees Enrollment Campaign – 2017" launched by "Employees Provident Fund Organisation" (EPFO) under the EPF & MP Act, 1952.

Please find enclosed herewith copy of minutes of the meeting held on 29.5.2017 on the above subject for information and necessary action.

DA: As above

(Santosh Mittal)
Dy. Director, Rly. Stores(G),
Railway Board
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29.05.2017 AT 11:00 A.M. & 3:30 P.M. IN HEAD OFFICE, NEW DELHI REGARDING COVERAGE OF UNENROLLED CONTRACT/CASUAL EMPLOYEES UNDER THE EMPLOYEES’ ENROLLMENT CAMPAIGN-2017 LAUNCHED BY EPFO.

The meeting with representatives of Zones of Indian Railways for coverage of unenrolled contract/casual employees under the Employees’ Enrollment Campaign-2017 was chaired by Dr. V.P Joy, Central Provident Fund Commissioner. List of all the participants is appended as ANNEXURE. The 48 number of officers represented different Railway Divisions attended the meeting.

At the outset, Shri M. Narayanappa, ACC (HQ) welcomed all the representatives of the Indian Railways. He with reference to earlier meetings enquired whether they were doing the work of uploading the contractor’s details on the EPFO portal. He said time and again, EPFO has been laying stress on this point of getting the contractor details uploaded on the EPFO website, as EPFO has launched a coverage drive for coverage of unenrolled contract/casual employees under the Employees’ Enrolment Campaign 2017, which will end on 30.06.2017. He reiterated that when Indian Railways as the principal employer uploads the contractors details, EPFO can examine whether these contractors are complying with the PF rules or not.

ACC (HQ) asked Sh. Randhir kumar APFC to make demo for the procedure for uploading the contractors details at the EPFO web portal to all the participating representatives. The whole procedure was explained in detail to the participants. Sh. Randhir kumar APFC explained that before awarding a contract one can also find the details about the compliance status of the contractor to whom they want to award the contract. However, ACC (HQ) pointed out that financial detail of the employees under the contractor will not appear in the public domain. One representative from the Indian Railway asked if person with the same name may also appear in the information provided by the contractor to which ACC (HQ) replied in affirmative. The contractor can show the same name for different contracts because a person may work for different contracts of the same contractor at different places. He explained that before a person works for Railways, with the facility of online registration, Railways can have an
idea about the contractor. He laid emphasis on Railways uploading the details of contractor working for Railways and further verification will be carried out by the EPFO officials.

ACC (HQ) said that the payment details data has been captured from the monthly return (ECR) which has been filed by the individual establishments and if Railways want further verification, they can ask the contractor for the monthly return filed by him which is available with him. But they do not have any authentication from the EPFO. Railways can call for the monthly return’s hard copy from the contractor and can cross verify the same with available data on EPFO website. ACC (HQ) stressed that instructions from the Railways headquarters can be issued not only to the zones but to the divisions also to ensure PF benefits to the contractors and the workers working under them.

Some representatives suggested that these kind of instructions can be incorporated in the contract Agreement of Railways with the contractor in future contracts. One representative asked about all documents which are needed as an internal check, before the payment is released to the contractor. ACC (HQ) replied that it can be verified by monthly ECR that a particular contractor is submitting to the PF office every month. This facility is also available on EPFO website. Once those names are confirmed, then Railway can release the payment. This precaution can be taken while releasing the payment.

Another representative suggested that uniform guidelines be issued by the Railway Board to all its divisions for the implementation of the Act. These guidelines may be incorporated in the Contract Agreement as well as in the General conditions of contract. ACC-II requested for a copy of the agreement so that it can be looked for suggesting such changes. ACC (HQ) stated that EPFO wants this work to be done in a smooth and amicable way. He said that progress has not been reflected in these 3-4 months which is why EPFO has been calling these meetings so that social security coverage for every worker working for railways can be provided. He lamented that till now only 8 representatives of Indian Railways have registered at the principal employer portal.

ACC (HQ) further asked information about coolies as also what are the benefits that are being extended to them by the Indian Railways. To this, the representatives of Indian
Railways replied that outdoor medical facilities, complimentary railway passes and licence to do business are being provided to the coolies. ACC (HQ) further asked about the income of railway coolies to which it was replied that it depends on the place of work. However, it may be around Rs. 500 per day on an average. They reiterated that coolies are not employees of Railways. Any policy decision can be taken at Railway Board level.

As regard the EPF contributions and benefits under EPF & MP Act, 1952, ACC (HQ) informed the representatives about the same. This was also shown in slides. He informed that in case of a death of a member while in service Rs. 6 lakhs is being given to dependents under EDLI scheme. He explained about EPF contributions and administrative charges under various schemes handled by EPFO. ACC (HQ) asked all the representatives to give assurance of uploading the contractors details in the first week of June 2017 because the work of verifying them will have to be carried out by EPFO officials before 30.06.2017.

ACC-II (CAIU) informed the representatives about the Employees’ Enrolment Campaign, 2017 under which social security benefits will be extended to all the eligible works in the country. He also explained the various financial incentives being offered to establishments to enroll their workers.

The meeting resumed after the lunch break when CPFC joined and chaired the meeting. On joining of the CPFC, ACC (HQ) informed CPFC that deliberations were already done about how to upload the principal employer details. Till now, only 8 units and 65 contractors have been registered. It was informed that there are lot of financial advantages of campaign. For online registration of contractors under principal employer portal, Railway Board has sent communication three times, and in spite of that till now only 65 contractors details have been uploaded.

ACC (HQ) informed the CPFC about the benefits being extended by Railways to the coolies. They are independent workers. CPFC was informed that detailed process of online registration of contractors have been explained to the representatives. ACC (HQ) also informed CPFC that the representatives also want some changes to be made in their GCC/CA.
On this, one representative read out some portion of the GCC referred to as clause 568 wherein there was a mention about the compliance to the PF Act. At this ACC (HQ) intervened and asked as to why they were asking for changes in the GCC when the mention of PF was already there in GCC since 2012 as per the document dt 14/12/2012. CPFC advised to act fast on this matter, as hardly one month is left in Employees’ Enrollment Campaign’ 2017 after which workers will lose many benefits. He reiterated on the point to ask the contractors to get their workers enrolled under the campaign before 30.06.2017, as otherwise they will end up losing money. CPFC laid emphasis to get this work done by 1st or 2nd June 2017 because after that, EPFO has to start its exercise whether these contractors are complying with the PF Act.

Indian Railway Representatives suggested that since an employee gets transferred, registration can be done designation wise if possible, to which CPFC suggested to register designation wise instead of name. Indian Railway representatives informed that there are 64 divisions in Indian Railways and each division has different departments such as signal, mechanical, electrical etc. and each department has separate contractors working under them. CPFC opined that social security in the form of housing, old age pension, education loan, PF, health etc. should be given to contract employees of Indian Railways and this can only be done if the contractors working for railways are registered with EPFO. EPFO can have a watch on the workers working under them and in turn can extend these social security benefits to them.

CPFC informed that very soon UMANG services will be provided wherein online services will be available on mobiles. Every day EPFO is launching new softwares. CPFC urged the need to pass the social security benefits to the workers. CPFC further informed the Indian Railway representatives that EPFO is taking up the matter of registration of contractors’ employed by Indian Railways in a smooth and amicable manner, however, the desired results are not forthcoming and EPFO will be constrained to take legal measures to ensure compliance to the law and notices may be issued to people having TAN in Indian Railways including contract awarding authorities.

CPFC concluded the meeting by advising that designation can be put in the name column for registration. The authorities who have registered can then add as many number of users with different mobile numbers and start doing the work of uploading contractors details
should complete within 2-3 days. The Indian Railway representatives assured CPFC that they will issue these instructions by tomorrow and further assured CPFC that all effort shall be made to complete uploading of contractors in the Principal Employer Portal within one week. CPFC asked to get this task completed immediately.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the chair.