

# Modi unveils plans to make labour welfare net stronger

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**C**OIMBATORE: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday announced that the government is in the process of bringing in new legislation to secure the interests of both unorganised and organised workers. The Employees State Insurance Act and the Employees Provident Fund Organisation Act are aimed at providing a stronger welfare net.

Inaugurating a new Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) Medical College and Hospital in Coimbatore, he said these new laws would provide more choice, increased coverage for workers and employers, and better and expanded range of services for organized sector workers. He hoped the Tamil Nadu government would act quickly to start the college.

The ESIC scheme entitles all government staff to free medical service at ESIC-run hospitals. There are 10 of them in TN. "This project worth Rs 580 crores will be a boon to ESIC beneficiaries," he said. "We should strive to make this medical college and hospital a model for high quality medical education and treatment to workers of the State," he said.

ESIC has decided to adopt at least two model hospitals in each state. The Centre is committed to the development of a generous and comprehensive social safety net for all workers, he said.

Speaking extempore in English, Modi said his government was looking at simplifying labour laws to increase the ease of doing business and facilitate job creation. "The labour ministry is simplifying central labour laws by consolidating 44 laws into four labour codes--wages, industrial relations, safety, security and health" he said. He also hinted that talks were on with trade unions. "We are building consensus on these reforms through extensive stakeholder consultations with employers, worker's representatives and state governments" he said.

The government has approved a scheme for upgradation of existing state and Central government-run medical colleges to

increase MBBS seats, he said.

### **Greeting in Tamil wows crowd**

Narendra Modi sought to strike a chord with the audience at the rally by starting his speech in Tamil. "Vanakkam," the Prime Minister said to loud applause from the audience, further saying, "Indur Kovai maanagaram vanathathil Magizhchi" (I am happy to have come to Coimbatore city). An elated crowd responded with claps and whistles. The rest of his speech was in Hindi, however. TNN

### **Tamilisai miffed by police action**

State BJP president Tamilisai Sounderarajan was visibly upset, allegedly after she got information that some party workers found it difficult to reach the venue because of `excessive' police action. She minced no words in warning the police against stopping her party cadres. Interrupting national secretary H Raja's speech, who was addressing the audience before Narendra Modi's arrival, she let the police know her mind.