

Maharashtra bares its heart, tells employers not to cut workers' wages

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MUMBAI: The state does have a humane side to it, after all. Amid the lockdown in metros, the government has written to all industries and commercial establishments not to terminate employees or hold back wages, especially those of labourers and contract workers.

Labour commissioner Mahendra Kalyankar has dashed off a letter stating that it is the government which has appealed to the public to stay put and this is bound to keep workers from reporting to work. And so it is possible that employers terminate services of employees or cut salaries.

"So, we've asked establishments to cooperate by not terminating employees, especially casual or contract workers, not even cut their wages," said Kalyankar. "Those who have taken leave should be paid salaries or wages for this period."

Data shows that 26 lakh workers are employed in industries registered with the labour department. Also, 58 lakh people work in shops and establishments. Casual and temporary workers in industries not governed by laws are likely to be exploited, said labour officials.

Vikram Shroff, head HR laws (employment & labour) at Nishith Desai Associates said: "...Employers are exploring options to reduce wages, extend unpaid leave, lay employees off to ensure survival. The circular will disable those plans. The circular does not mention labour laws that are being amended and its legality may be tested..."