

1. NOTIFICATION U/S 80C(2)(xv)

Investment in National Housing Bank (Tax Saving) Term Deposit Scheme, 2008 has been made eligible for deduction u/s 80C.

(Source: Notification No. 3 of 2009 dated 05.01.09)

2. CONDITIONS FOR PREPAID ELECTRONIC MEAL CARDS

Any expenditure on or payment through non-transferable pre paid electronic meal card by employees is exempt from Fringe Benefit Tax. CBDT has notified the various conditions to be fulfilled to claim exemption. The main conditions are:

1. The card shall be issued under a scheme framed by the employer.
2. The card shall be issued by a bank
3. The card shall be used only for the purchases of ready to eat food or non alcoholic beverages and that too not exceeding a sum of Rs 100 per day.
4. The employer shall keep the record of all purchases on such cards.

(Source: Notification No 1 of 2009 dated 05.01.09)

3. HIGHER DEPRECIATION ON NEW COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

New commercial vehicles acquired on or after 01.01.09 but before 01.04.09 are eligible for higher depreciation at the rate of 50%.

(Source: Notification No 10 of 2009 dated 19.01.09)

4. SERVICE TAX REDUCED TO 10%

Service tax has been reduced from 12% to 10% by CBEC vide notification No 8/2009 dated 24.02.09.

5. EXCISE DUTY REDUCED TO 8%

General rate of Central Excise Duty has been reduced from 10% to 8% w.e.f from midnight of 24th February 2009.

6. "LET US SHARE" PUBLICATION BY IT DEPT.

A book "Let us Share", a publication by the Income Tax department, was released on 4th February 2009. The readers will find how the department seized huge cash at the airport from a taxpayer on the basis of his cell phone number using ITPS, a data-mining tool enabling 360° profiling of the taxpayer, within an hour's time. The compilation also unravels the preparations that go into making representation before judicial authorities, as in the much talked about Vodafone case.

The book has an interesting collection of tax scrutiny orders showcasing investigations conducted by the Tax department with telling results and appellate orders containing persuasive and innovative interpretations of law. It includes a variety of search and seizure cases outlining modus operandi of tax evasion, revealing how the investigation wing of the ITD across the country tackled evasion through sustained inquiries and real time surveillance of tax evaders.

It is an attempt in sharing its experience with the public for the first time and is in tune with the philosophy underlying the Right to Information Act, i.e. transparency and openness.

7. ENLARGEMENT OF SCOPE OF TRP SCHEME

Govt. has decided to enlarge the scope of Tax Return Preparer (TRP) Scheme to include TDS & Service Tax Returns. ■