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Centre notifies four new Labour Codes

They replace 29 fragmented laws, some of them dating back to 1930s; PM terms Codes 'progressive'; trade unions call them 'pro-employer'

A.M. Jigesh
Sobhana K. Naik
NEW DELHI

The Centre on Friday notified all four Labour Codes, ushering in major reforms, including extending universal social security coverage for gig workers, promising gender pay parity, expanded rights and safety for women workers, giving statutory backing for minimum wages, and introducing fixed-term employment.

The Code on Wages (2019), Industrial Relations Code (2020), Code on Social Security (2020), and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code (2020) had been held back due to protests from trade unions, which continue. In a joint statement, 10 Cen-

Consolidated Codes

An overview of the four Codes notified by the Centre and their scope

■ **Code on Wages (2019)** unifies four labour laws related to wages and bonuses

■ **Industrial Relations Code (2020)** consolidates laws governing trade unions, conditions of employment in industrial establishments, and the settlement of industrial disputes

■ **Code on Social Security (2020)** extends social security benefits to all employees and workers, covering both the organised and unorganised sectors

■ **Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code (2020)** consolidates and modernises 13 existing central labour laws related to workplace safety, health, and working conditions



tral Trade Unions called the Codes an "anti-worker and pro-employer" reform.

The Codes, which came into effect on Friday, replace 29 fragmented laws, many of which date back to pre-independence and early post-independence

eras (1930s-1950s). Prime Minister Narendra Modi described these as "one of the most comprehensive and progressive labour-oriented reforms since Independence".

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Centre notifies four new Labour Codes

He said these laws will serve as a strong foundation for universal social security, minimum and timely payment of wages, safe workplaces, and remunerative opportunities.

Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said the Codes will formalise employment, strengthen worker protections, and make the labour ecosystem simpler, safer and globally aligned.

The reforms include expanded rights and safety for women, including night-shift work, free annual health check-ups for workers aged over 40 years, pan-India ESIC coverage including hazardous process units, and a single registration, licence and return system.

Additional systemic reforms include a national floor wage, gender-neutral work policy, inspector-cum-facilitator model for supportive compliance, faster dispute resolution through two-member tribunals, and a National Occupational Safety, Health (OSH) Board to harmonise safety standards.

The reforms are aimed at streamlining contractual workers with the provision of "fixed term employees" which entails all benefits equal to those of permanent workers, including leave, medical, and social security.

The Codes have defined gig work, platform work, and aggregators for the first time.

The government will now initiate consultations to frame detailed rules and schemes.

A NEW ERA
for
Nation's Workforce

"The nation is proud of its workforce. Shramay Jayate!"
-Prime Minister, Narendra Modi

FOUR LABOUR CODES
MADE EFFECTIVE

The Code on Wages, 2019 The Code on Social Security, 2020
The Industrial Relations Code, 2020 The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020

MODI GOVERNMENT'S GUARANTEE

- ✓ Minimum and timely wages for all
- ✓ Appointment letters made mandatory
- ✓ Equal opportunities and pay for all women workers
- ✓ Social Security guaranteed for 40 crore workers
- ✓ Gratuity for Fixed Term Employees after 1 year of service
- ✓ Mandatory free annual health check-ups for workers
- ✓ 100% health security for workers in hazardous sectors

Labour Reforms for Aatmanirbhar Bharat

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Protesters clash with police for a second day at Sangai Festival

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

The Sangai Festival in Manipur began on Friday amid protests by internally displaced persons (IDPs) and members of NGOs, impacting attendance.

Many are opposing the annual festival, held after two years, as they feel the State government should have resolved the ethnic conflict and resettled the IDPs before organising tourism events. The ethnic conflict between the tribal Kuki-Zo and the non-tribal Meitei communities broke out on May 3, 2023.

The protesters clashed with the police for the second successive day on Friday

after they tried to storm the festival venue in the State's capital, Imphal.

The police fired tear gas shells to restore order after the protesters allegedly pelted stones at them.

The clashes occurred amid a "cease-work" strike by the Coordinating Committee on Manipul Integrity, a Meitei pressure group leading the protest. The organisation criticised the State administration operating under President's Rule for pushing forward an "anti-people" festival.

The last Sangai Festival was held before the ethnic conflict in Manipur that claimed more than 260 lives and displaced some 62,000 others.





Rethinking a symbol of 'environment responsibility'

The global push to ease industrial norms has recently extended to one of the most visible symbols of environmental responsibility – green cover within industrial estates and individual industries. The growing trend of reducing green-cover requirements for industrial estates, units within estates, and standalone industries is often celebrated as a step toward "ease of doing business". However, the rationale for such relaxation – frequently based on international examples where minimum plantation norms appear lower – often lacks ecological context. While these relaxations may simplify compliance and enhance land-use efficiency, they raise a critical question: Are we mistaking convenience for sustainability?

While industrial development inevitably entails ecological alteration, including the clearing of vegetation and habitats, it is critical to recognise that on-site green belts cannot compensate for the broader ecological losses associated with land conversion. Green belts primarily provide localised benefits such as microclimate regulation, dust suppression and visual greening. But they do not restore forest functions, biodiversity or ecosystem resilience. Their role remains mitigative, not restorative.

Empirical evidence from multiple regions shows that well-designed green belts can reduce total suspended particulate matter (TSP) by up to 65% and lower ambient noise levels by 10 decibels-17 decibels in industrial or roadside environments. Vegetation acts as a filtering and dispersing surface, improving air quality and reducing thermal stress. However, these gains are spatially limited and cannot replicate the complex ecological services – such as carbon sequestration, hydrological regulation, and habitat connectivity – provided by intact or semi-natural landscapes.

Research across biomes reinforces that industrial plantations and internal green belts are poor substitutes for natural forests, wetlands or connected ecosystems. They tend to be narrow, mono-specific, and vulnerable to degradation over time. In short, green belts mitigate local operational impacts but do not reverse the ecological costs of industrial land use.

Why global parallels are misleading
Policymakers and planners often point to other nations where the mandated green-area ratios for industries are lower. However, such comparisons rarely account for differences in population density, ecological capacity and economic structure – all of which shape a country's environmental resilience.

A nation with vast open spaces and lower



P. Ragavan
is a researcher in the field of vegetated coastal habitats such as mangroves

population pressure can afford smaller on-site green ratios because its surrounding landscapes still provide ecological buffering. In contrast, in densely populated and industrially intensive regions, green buffers play an essential role in maintaining liveable conditions. Applying the same percentage everywhere is like prescribing the same diet for everyone – regardless of age, activity, or health. These differences underline a key point: policy transfers across countries must be ecologically calibrated. Borrowing a numerical target for green cover from another region – without considering population density, ecosystem stress, and climate zones – does not constitute evidence-based policymaking.

A balanced, landscape-level strategy
Rather than merely reducing plot-level green cover, particularly when uneven requirements for different industry types create uncertainty and inconsistency, a more balanced and scientifically informed approach would integrate industrial growth with landscape-scale greening. Partial relaxation of internal green cover accompanied by mandatory off-site greening commitments could ensure that industrial expansion coexists with ecological renewal. Such commitments could include: developing regional or State-level green reserves adjacent to industrial clusters; restoring degraded lands and buffer zones around protected areas or river basins and enhancing ecological health of protected areas; and integrating industrial greening efforts into national or regional green credit or carbon offset programmes, ensuring accountability and measurable ecological outcomes.

This two-tiered strategy, of combining on-site mitigation with off-site restoration within the region/State, would help transform industries into partners in ecological stewardship, not merely compliance actors. On-site green belts can serve as localised "healing zones", while landscape-level greening functions as the ecological immune system sustaining the broader environment.

By adopting this integrated approach, future industrial expansion can often be accommodated within existing premises, optimising land use while reducing the need for new green-field developments. This reduces additional habitat loss and promotes the restoration of surrounding ecosystems through coordinated afforestation, wetland rehabilitation, and habitat connectivity measures.

Such a strategy embodies the true essence of Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) where economic development is in synergy with ecological renewal. Localised plantations within factory premises may contribute to environmental

management, but the real sustainability dividend comes from restoring natural systems beyond industrial boundaries.

Ultimately, the strength of future economies will depend not only on industrial productivity but also on the resilience of the ecosystems that sustain them. The power of NbS lies not in decorative greenery within factory walls, but in linking industrial progress to the regeneration of living landscapes ensuring that growth and nature thrive together.

The future of industrial sustainability will not be defined by how many trees stand inside factory gates, but by how deeply industries root themselves in the health of the landscapes that surround them.

Green belts within industrial premises function much like medicine applied directly to a wound – immediate and localised. Expanding natural green cover around industrial clusters, on the other hand, is comparable to strengthening the body's overall immunity – long term, systemic and preventive. Both approaches are indispensable, and neglecting either would be akin to attempting to heal an injury on the right hand by treating the left. While industrial flexibility is important, ecological safeguards cannot be compromised for short-term convenience.

Industries as ecological stewards

The contribution of industries to national growth and the comfort of modern life is undeniable. Yet, their ecological footprint during construction and operation remains an unavoidable reality. Traditionally, ecological stewardship has been entrusted to local communities through initiatives such as community forestry, joint forest management, and local conservation programmes. Industries, by contrast, have long been perceived as entities to regulate or penalise, rather than as partners to empower in environmental stewardship.

Industries drive national growth yet create ecological impacts. Traditionally, communities led stewardship, while industries were regulated. Today, sustainable development reframes this role, emphasising industrial stewardship through green belts, biodiversity offsets, and circular practices. Allowing calibrated reductions in on-site green cover, balanced by compensatory duties, encourages industries as ecological partners. Informed citizen participation further strengthens this hybrid approach, promoting a practical, future-ready balance between development and environmental protection and lasting resilience.

The views expressed are personal

Industrial on-site green cover and green belts are poor substitutes for natural forests, wetlands or connected ecosystems

Overcoming resistance

Version 2 of the National Action Plan on AMR requires fresh commitment

The introduction of the second iteration of the National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance is an acknowledgement that, but for some marginal gains, implementation of version 1 was, at best, sluggish. In a welcome move, the Centre has released a further version of the policy, though the details are not yet available in the public realm, to give the nation a booster shot at trying to fix the rather humongous AMR problem that the country has had to contend with, increasing volumes to boot. In October, WHO released its Global antibiotic resistance surveillance report, which recorded that in 2023, approximately one in three bacterial infections in India were resistant to commonly-used antibiotics. Globally, it was one in six confirmed infections. It spelt out why India was disproportionately affected – factors included a high infectious disease burden, overuse and misuse of antibiotics and gaps in the surveillance and healthcare infrastructure. *E.coli* and *Klebsiella pneumoniae* have exhibited high resistance to critical antibiotics, making the very last line of drugs ineffective. But human health is not the sole footprint AMR possesses; there is scarcely a field in the food chain where its cold arms have not touched – from veterinary practices to contaminating soil and water health and, thereby, agriculture and aquaculture. This ubiquitous spread of AMR has spurred scientists to push the One Health technique – it integrates the prisms of human health, animal health and environmental health – to handle growing resistance in communities.

The time is, no doubt, ripe for India to take AMR seriously and push for an enhanced, committed antibiotics stewardship programme. While the first National Action Plan played a key role in raising the profile of AMR, the actual implementation suffered. It is true that the country expanded its national surveillance programme by adding a solid laboratory network (thanks, in part, to the COVID-19 pandemic), it also scored a win with the ban on Colistin as a growth factor in the animal husbandry sector. However, the programme flailed as it failed to secure potent collaborations with States. A few States drew up their own policies, but only Kerala implemented it well enough to see a slight drop in AMR levels in the community, recently. This policy will have to tackle every aspect of AMR's causative factors, including the rampant overuse and misuse of antibiotics. The One Health approach will have to be strengthened, and better co-ordination with States ensured. This time around, the policy will have to be the real deal and deliver, against resistance.





A snakebite that sparked a change

Last month, Kerala's deadliest snakebite victim became a national hero. Though snakebites are common in the state, a 20th birthday boy's tragic death in a school in Wayanad, and people were outraged. Since then, a relief rescue network has been launched and school infrastructure upgraded. **Sureth Babu George** reports on Kerala's quest for zero snakebite mortality.

On October 10, following the death of a 20-year-old student, a snakebite in Kerala's Wayanad district, a relief rescue network was launched. The network, which is a joint effort of the state government, the district administration, and the local community, aims to provide immediate medical aid to snakebite victims. The network also aims to educate the public about snakebites and to prevent snakebites in the first place.

The rescue network was launched in response to a tragic incident that occurred in a school in Wayanad. A 20-year-old student, Sureth Babu George, was bitten by a snake while playing in the schoolyard. He died of the bite on October 10. The incident sparked a wave of outrage among the local community and the state government. In response, a relief rescue network was launched to provide immediate medical aid to snakebite victims.

The network is a joint effort of the state government, the district administration, and the local community. It aims to provide immediate medical aid to snakebite victims. The network also aims to educate the public about snakebites and to prevent snakebites in the first place. The network is a testament to the power of community action and the importance of immediate medical aid in snakebite cases.

The network is a testament to the power of community action and the importance of immediate medical aid in snakebite cases. It is a reminder that even in the most remote areas, there is a way to provide immediate medical aid to snakebite victims. The network is a source of hope for many people who have been affected by snakebites.

Where fear and hostility once dominated, there is now a sense of respect and respect for these often misunderstood reptiles.

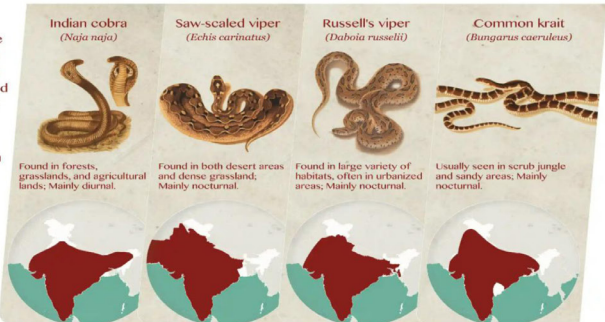
The state has also prioritized supplying safety equipment, including protective gear, to its health and law enforcement agencies. It has also launched a public awareness campaign to educate people about snakebites and to prevent snakebites in the first place.

The incident that sparked the network was a tragedy, but it also sparked a change. It is a reminder that even in the most remote areas, there is a way to provide immediate medical aid to snakebite victims.

Snakebites in India

A significant number of snake bites in India are attributed to the widely distributed **Big Four** species.

As of 2023, India only has polyvalent antivenom to neutralise venoms of the Big Four.



Q . King Cobra is the only snake that makes its own nest. Why does it make its nest? (2010)

- It is a snake-eater and the nest helps attract other snakes
- It is a viviparous snake and needs a nest to give birth to its offspring
- It is an oviparous snake and lays its eggs in the nest and guards the nest until they are hatched
- It is a large, cold-blooded animal and needs a nest to hibernate in the cold season

Q . Consider the following statements: (2019)

- Some species of turtles are herbivores.
- Some species of fish are herbivores.
- Some species of marine mammals are herbivores.
- Some species of snakes are viviparous.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- 1 and 3 only
- 2, 3, and 4 only
- 2 and 4 only
- 1, 2, 3 and 4

Q. For which one of the following snakes is the diet mainly composed of other snakes? (2008)

- Krait
- Russell's viper
- Rattlesnake
- King Cobra