

Centre operationalises Labour Codes, publishes Rules; trade unions protest

The Codes will replace 29 labour laws that governed provisions, including wages, social security, working hours, retirement benefits, and trade union rights; officials maintain the Rules have been published with ‘minor amendments’ to the draft rules prep

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Over 30 gazette notifications issued on Friday and Saturday, the Union government fully operationalised the four Labour Codes. Officials maintained that the rules had been published with “minor amendments” to the draft rules prepublished in December 2025.



The government had announced the implementation of the four Labour Codes from November 21, 2025. With the notification of the Rules, the Codes will replace 29 labour laws that governed provisions, including wages, social security, working hours, retirement benefits, and trade union rights.

Soon after the publication of Rules, members of 10 central trade unions held protests across the country, burning copies of it. The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh said it was studying the Rules and would soon come up with a comment on them.

Opposition parties

Alleged that the publication was a direct attack on the rights of workers.

All stakeholders had been given one month’s time to submit responses on the draft Rules, a senior government functionary said.

“We have gone through all the responses and considered some of the suggestions, and amended the Rules accordingly,” the official said, adding that the amendments were minor.

On the controversial subject of minimum wages, the Rules of the Code on Wages said the criteria shall be separately specified by the Central government by a special or general order, and the rate of wages for a day is fixed, and “such amount shall be divided by eight for fixing the rate of wages for an hour and multiplied by twenty six for fixing the rate of wages for a month...”

For fixing the floor wage, the Central government, according to the Rules, may consult a Central Advisory Board, taking into account the minimum living standard, including food, clothing,

housing, and any other factors considered appropriate by the Central government from time to time.

The number of hours of work for a normal working day “for an employee whose wage period is on a daily basis” shall be eight hours. For other employees, the total number of weekly working hours shall not exceed 48 hours. The Rules mandate that every employer shall issue wage slips, electronically or in physical form to the employees.

The Rules for Code on Social Security changes 12 rules, including the Employees’ State Insurance (Central) Rules, 1950 and the Employees’ Provident Funds Appellate Tribunal (Conditions of Service) Rules, 1997.

The Code on Industrial Relations says where there is only one registered trade union operating in an industrial establishment having its membership not less than 30% of the total workers employed in the industrial establishment, the employer of such industrial establishment shall recognise such trade union as the sole negotiating union of the workers.

Commenting on the Rule, senior leader of Centre of Indian Trade Unions R. Karumalaiyan said the Union government had ignored the amendments moved by the CTUs. “We had submitted amendments seeking clarity on working hours, trade union rights, minimum wages, floor wages, and protection of social security. This government has ignored all our suggestions, forcing us to go on protests,” Mr. Karumalaiyan said.

The Communist Party of India Marxist (CPIM) said in a statement that the Union government “deceptively waited” till the Assembly election in four States and a Union Territory were over before notifying the Rules. “Within just four days after the announcement of results, they have now operationalised the Labour Codes. This exposes the deceptive modus operandi of the BJP-led Union government,” the CPI (M) said, urging States to reject the Rules.