



BAJIRAO IAS ACADEMY

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**FOUR NEW LABOUR CODES
2025**

Topics for Today

- 1. Centre notifies four new Labour codes**
- 2. A new direction for India should be toward Asia**
- 3. India's first private PSLV launch likely in early 2026.**

Centre notifies four new Labour Codes

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'

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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 (OSHC) 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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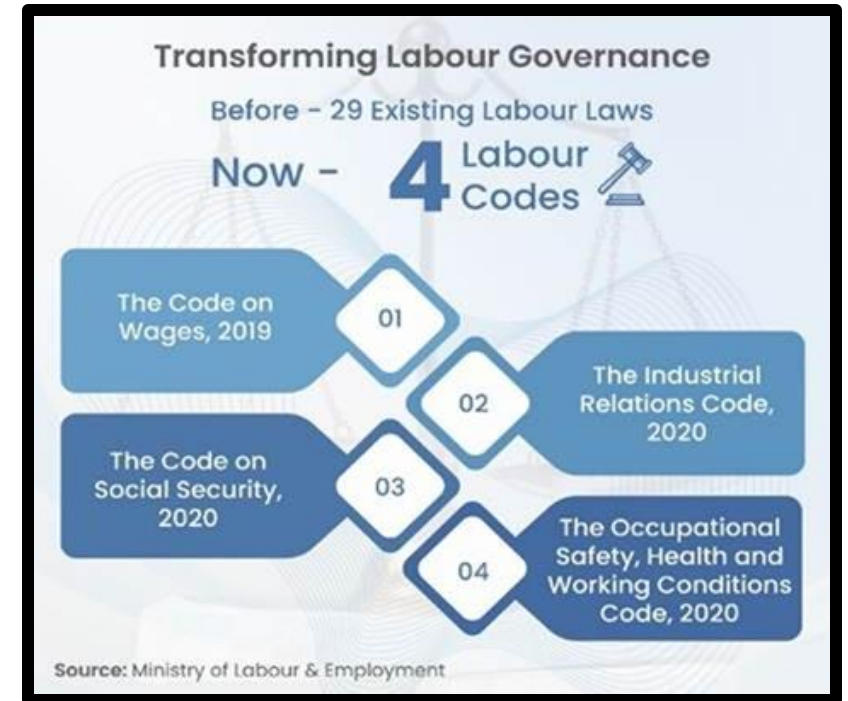
Syllabus

General Studies paper II

- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.
- **Inclusive growth** and issues arising from it.

CONTEXT

- ❑ The Central Government has officially implemented all **four Labour Codes** from November 21, replacing 29 outdated laws and introducing major reforms in **wages, social security, industrial relations, and workplace safety**, with strong support from industry bodies and mixed reactions from trade unions.



Major Highlights of the Newly Implemented Labour Codes:

- ❑ The **Code on Wages (2019)**, **Industrial Relations Code (2020)**, **Code on Social Security (2020)**, and **OSHWC Code (2020)** came into force together after a five-year wait.
- ❑ Industry bodies such as **CII**, **Nasscom**, and the **Indian Staffing Federation** welcomed the reforms, calling them **modern, progressive, and worker-centric**.
- ❑ The Codes promise **fair wages, universal social security, gender pay parity, and safer working conditions** across all industries.
- ❑ The reforms introduce **gig and platform worker definitions**, ensuring social security coverage for nearly **50 crore unorganised-sector workers**.
- ❑ **Women's rights expand** significantly: night-shift permission, safer workplaces, and gender-neutral provisions ensure wider labour participation.
- ❑ The Codes also ensure **mandatory appointment letters, timely wage payments, and free annual health check-ups** for workers above 40.

Reactions from Trade Unions, Industry Leaders, and Government

- The **Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS)** praised the reforms as the biggest worker-centric move since Independence.
- The **National Front of Indian Trade Unions (NFITU)** welcomed the guarantee of **minimum wages** and **equal pay for equal work** for women.
- In contrast, **10 Central Trade Unions** condemned the Codes as **pro-employer**, labelling them a “return to master-servant era” and announcing protests.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** hailed the Codes as a comprehensive overhaul enabling **ease of doing business**, simple compliance, and **universal social security**.
- **Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya** emphasised sustained coordination with States to ensure smooth rollout, as nearly all States have published draft rules.

Understanding Labour Codes :

- The Codes consolidate **29 Central labour laws** into **4 streamlined Codes**.

Key reforms include:

- **National floor wage** ensuring statutory minimum pay across India.
- **Fixed-term employment**, granting contract workers full benefits equal to permanent employees.
- **Aadhaar-linked Universal Account Number** enabling portability of social security benefits across States.
- **Inspector-cum-facilitator model** replacing punitive inspections with supportive compliance.
- **OSH Board** for national-level harmonisation of workplace safety standards.
- **Coverage expansion:** Gig workers, migrant workers, platform workers, plantation labourers, and hazardous industry workers brought under safety and social security systems.

India's Foreign policy shift to Asia

The new direction for India should be toward Asia

The photograph of Russian President Vladimir Putin, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in an animated conversation at the 2025 Tianjin Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in early September this year exhibited elements unifying them, which has been the hallmark of meetings of the G-7. Just a month later, at the Busan Summit 2025, the photograph of U.S. President Donald Trump, who looked uneasy, and Mr. Xi, who looked calm, at the "G2" summit, acknowledges the power shift to Asia.

The U.S. Secretary of State told the Senate that the story of the 21st century will be written in Asia. The global trend was then obscured by now U.S. Ambassador to India Sergio Gorrer laying out the U.S.'s priorities: 'pull India' to its side away from China and get India to stop buying cheap Russian oil. Mr. Modi later made clear that India's future cannot be dictated by others.

A critical moment for foreign policy

India's foreign policy is at an inflexion point as it is on the cusp of becoming one of the largest economies, and the U.S. is upending multilateralism and reducing India's strategic policy space in several key domains as India's relations with China improve and those with Russia strengthen. Is the U.S. thwarting India's rise to prevent another China? With China, it should be a case of 'trust but verify' as negotiations for an international border in Ladakh advance with it having the potential to settle the Kashmir issue and investment that may follow. Russia is a 75-year-old tested partner and its S-400 was the game-changer in 'Operation Sindoor'.

For India, the choice is not binary, as western analysts argue, tilting towards the U.S. or China. The new direction for India should be toward Asia, whose market will be larger than the U.S.

Asia is coming together in a form very different to the way the West came together, not based on colonialism or global rules but shared value chain interests. Countries in the region want



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is a former United Nations diplomat

Asia is at the centre of the world and India should focus on self-sustaining growth

partnership with India, as it has the technological capacity and economic heft to balance China.

Asia, with two-thirds of the global population and wealth, is again at the centre of the world. BRICS, with overlapping membership and policies, the SCO, with its stress on geo-security-economics, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, a political-trade grouping, are going to be intertwined. The door to re-entry into the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership is still open. This is where trade concessions should be made, which will be outside World Trade Organization rules, including *modus vivendi* on trade with China, as an alternative market to the U.S.

Hard decisions

India has moved away from the hesitations of a developing country, ring-fencing its growth, to an emerging power, confidently engaging others as a peer. U.S. pressure has led to a new national consensus on acceptability of hard decisions.

First, operationalisation of 'strategic autonomy' should be based on India's uniqueness having two global agendas. It has the highest growth rate, huge potential till 2100, the largest labour pool and the highest number of the poor. Within the United Nations, India's foundational sustainable development interests are closer to the Global South. India will need to clarify its understanding of 'partnership' linking value chains and adjusting priorities without diluting them to avoid accepting the agendas and frameworks of others.

Second, the new rules will be very different to the old ones. Asia had no answer to Europe's gunboats and later leverage, and interdependence gave immense advantage to the West. Interconnectedness of the digital economy is reflected in technological capacity, not diplomacy, leading to military capability. Assumptions of foreign, technology and security policies are being questioned as innovation interconnections determine economic growth, political influence and military strength. For

India, there can be no compromise on national data, endogenous technology innovation, local defence production and inclusive growth.

Third, cyber warfare should be the central pillar of national security, based on India's comparative advantage, and not theatre commands as land-based threats have changed. China has stepped back from the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor which Pakistan has substituted with expensive Asian Development Bank loans. It has strategic support from the U.S., a mutual defence pact with Saudi Arabia and increased influence, along with the U.S., in Bangladesh. The U.S. is seeking the Bagram base in Afghanistan. India has also secured a six-month waiver from U.S. sanctions on Chabahar Port which gave India an opening into Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia and Russia.

The evolving neighbourhood landscape suggests the need for a national debate on reorienting defence allocations – halving the size of the Army and reducing numbers of large (imported) platforms for endogenous Artificial Intelligence (AI), air defence, space, missiles and drones where India has world-class capability – to factor in the need for continuing innovation, with spin-offs for growth.

An AI future

Lastly, shaping the global AI future is necessary for double-digit inclusive growth. Bernstein, a wealth management firm, in a report has asked questions about India's ₹10,372-crore AI mission, warning that it could become inconsequential on the global stage. It also said that U.S. companies could dominate AI. A Parliamentary Standing Committee has emphasised the need for indigenous research in foundational AI models to ensure sovereign capability. Funding should increase at least 20-fold to support national strategic collaboration, high-end computational resources, proprietary models and talent development driven by the Prime Minister's Office. AI sovereignty is now the key requirement to be a global power by 2047.

Syllabus

General Studies paper II

- India and its neighborhood-relations.
- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Context

- ❑ India's foreign policy is undergoing a significant shift as global power moves from the West toward **Asia**, marked by India's growing engagements with **China**, **Russia**, **SCO**, **BRICS**, and the emerging Asian economic order.
- ❑ The editorial analyses why India must re-orient its strategic direction toward Asia instead of relying on a binary U.S.–China framework.



Emerging Asian Power Shift and India's Central Role

- **Growing Asian relevance:** Recent summits—from the **SCO Tianjin 2025** to the **G2 Busan Summit**—highlight the unmistakable geopolitical shift toward **Asia**, with China and India emerging as major poles.
- **Symbolic images:** The contrasting images of India-China-Russia leaders in animated conversation and a tense U.S.–China encounter indicate geopolitical rebalancing.
- **Recognition by the West:** The **S. Secretary of State** admitted that the **21st century will be written in Asia**, acknowledging Asia's demographic and economic dominance.
- **S. discomfort:** U.S. domestic actors push India away from China and Russia, reflecting anxiety over India's rising independent influence.
- **Indian assertion:** The Prime Minister has clarified that **India's strategic choices cannot be dictated by external powers**, reinforcing autonomy.

Asia's Unique Integration and India's Opportunity :

- **Non-Western template:** Asia is integrating not through colonial legacies or imposed rules but through **value-chain partnerships** and **economic complementarities**.
- **Demand for India:** Asian nations see India as a balancing force due to its **technology capacity, market size, and economic credibility**.
- **Rise of regional blocs:** **BRICS, SCO, and ASEAN** are becoming intertwined in geo-security, economic integration, and political cooperation.
- **Re-entry into RCEP:** The door remains open for India to rejoin **RCEP**, enabling access to the world's largest regional market.
- **Alternative to U.S. markets:** New **trade arrangements with China** may provide strategic breathing space beyond WTO structures.

Challenges :

- ❑ **External pressure:** Persistent pressure from the **S.** to align against China and Russia limits India's diplomatic manoeuvring space.
- ❑ **Geopolitical uncertainty:** Improving ties with China remain fragile due to unresolved **border disputes**, creating unpredictability.
- ❑ **Technology dependence:** Heavy reliance on **Western AI, chipsets, and digital infrastructure** restricts India's strategic autonomy.
- ❑ **Regional instability:** Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh face political volatility, affecting India's neighbourhood strategy.
- ❑ **Slow defence reform:** India's defence restructuring is slow, with large budgetary commitments to personnel rather than innovation.
- ❑ **Economic integration gaps:** India's exit from **RCEP** weakens its role in Asian supply chains.

India's First Private PSLV launch

India's first private PSLV launch likely in early 2026

Anonna Dutt
New Delhi, November 21

• WAY FORWARD FOR PRIVATE CONSORTIUM

THE FIRST flight of a privately built PSLV rocket will likely happen early next year, with two more launches planned for 2026, according to one of the industry partners developing the rocket.

"We have started delivering the PSLV hardware and we are hopeful that next year we will have two or three launches. This will of course depend on the payloads being ready as well as available slots with respect to ISRO's (Indian Space Research Organisation) launch calendar," said A T Ramchandani, senior VP and Head, L&T Precision Engineering & Systems, which is a part of the consortium manufacturing the private PSLV launchers.

For the first launch, the PSLV-N1 will carry the earth observation satellite EOS-10.

Initially, the mission was scheduled for the first quarter of 2025. According to sources, at least one mission with the privately manufactured PSLV would have been possible this year itself. However, it was delayed as the satellite it was supposed to carry was not ready.

"There were a few components or systems in which we faced challenges, but ISRO helped us out. We are geared up for launch," said Ramchandani.

THE PSLV an ISRO workhorse, is its first rocket to be manufactured privately



ISRO is currently responsible for contracting or providing payloads for these PSLV missions

THE CONTRACT was awarded to a consortium of HAL and L&T, which will manufacture at least five launch vehicles

IN FUTURE it is likely the consortium will be able to create its own client base, market the launches and schedule them as well

The Indian Space Research Organisation had called for commercialisation of its workhorse launch vehicle PSLV in 2022, making it the first vehicle to undergo the process after the space sector was opened up to private players.

While the contract awarded to the HAL and L&T consortium calls for manufacturing five launch vehicles for the space agency, there may be a possibility of more in the future.

"I believe that ISRO feels that the demand is there and we may end up doing another ten launches after these," said Ramchandani.

And, while the space agency is currently responsible for contracting or providing payloads for these PSLV missions, going forward, it is likely that the consortium will be able to create its own client base, market the launches, and schedule them as well.

"This is different from the SSLV model about which ISRO was very clear upfront about the companies having to produce the launch vehicle, sell the launches from day 1. It was on the company to see the potential demand and cater to it," he said.

The SSLV technology was transferred to HAL, which is also a part of the PSLV consortium.

Ramchandani added that companies manufacturing satellites have reached out to them, especially those working in domains such as communication and earth observation that usually require satellites heavier than ones that can be carried on smaller launch vehicles such as SSLV or Vikram-I.

"After a couple of launches the confidence will come. Today, we are also not stepping out and reaching out to customers, but I suppose that is the next step after a couple of launches," he said.

Syllabus

General Studies paper II

- Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.
- Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, Nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.

Context

- ❑ India is preparing for its first **privately built PSLV launch** in early 2026, marking a major step in the **commercialisation of ISRO's launch vehicles**.
- ❑ The HAL–L&T consortium will manufacture the rockets, with plans for future private clients and expanded mission capability.



Private PSLV Manufacturing and Upcoming Launches:

- ❑ India's first **privately built PSLV (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle)** is likely to launch in early 2026, with two additional missions planned during the year.
- ❑ The manufacturing contract was awarded to a **HAL–L&T consortium**, responsible for producing at least **five PSLV launch vehicles** for ISRO.
- ❑ According to L&T's Senior VP **T. Ramchandani**, PSLV hardware delivery has begun, and two to three missions could take off next year depending on **payload readiness** and **ISRO's launch calendar**.
- ❑ The first mission, **PSLV-N1**, will carry the **Earth-observation satellite EOS-10**, though earlier timelines were delayed due to satellite unavailability.
- ❑ ISRO originally aimed for a 2025 launch, and one mission could have taken place this year if the payload had been ready.

Growing Commercial Potential and Industry Demand

- ❑ This move follows ISRO's 2022 decision to **commercialise PSLV**, making it the first Indian launch vehicle outsourced to industry after space sector reforms.
- ❑ Unlike the **SSLV model**, where companies had to build and market launches from the beginning, PSLV missions will initially be contracted by ISRO.
- ❑ Going forward, the HAL–L&T consortium is expected to **develop its own client base**, independently market launches, and create mission schedules.
- ❑ Companies working in **communication, remote sensing, and Earth-observation satellites**—which require heavier payload capacity than SSLV or Vikram-I—have already approached the consortium.
- ❑ Ramchandani stated that demand is strong and the consortium may produce **10 additional PSLVs** beyond the initial five.

About PSLV and Private Participation:

- ❑ **PSLV:** India's most reliable launch vehicle; known for delivering satellites into **sun-synchronous and polar orbits**.
- ❑ **Commercialisation:** PSLV became the first ISRO rocket to be fully **outsourced to private industry** after 2020 space reforms.
- ❑ **HAL & L&T:** Core partners supplying major subsystems; now responsible for end-to-end rocket manufacturing.
- ❑ **SSLV vs PSLV:** SSLV is a small-lift, low-cost vehicle; PSLV is medium-lift with proven global demand.
- ❑ **ISRO's Vision:** Promote **private launch capability**, reduce manufacturing load, and expand India's share in the **global space economy**.



Thank you

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