

Editorial of the Day – 25.11.2025

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1.Labour and honour – On the four Labour Codes, the path ahead – (TH)

General Studies 3 – Economy **Topic** – Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.

1. Introduction

The Government of India is poised to implement four major Labour Codes, a move seen as a watershed moment in modernizing the country's archaic labour framework. By consolidating and replacing 29 existing labour laws, this reform aims to balance the needs of India's rapidly expanding workforce with the requirements of a competitive, investment-friendly economic environment.

2. The Four Labour Codes (Context)

The reforms streamline the regulatory framework into four specific codes –

1. Code on Wages
2. Code on Industrial Relations
3. Code on Social Security
4. Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSH)

3. Background & Status of Implementation

Legislative Timeline – The Codes were passed by Parliament between 2019 and 2020 but have faced significant delays in actual enforcement.

Compliance Reduction – The primary objective is to reduce the annual compliance burden on companies, thereby improving the "Ease of Doing Business."

Federal Structure – Since Labour is a subject in the Concurrent List, both Centre and States must frame rules.

1. The Centre has committed to supporting States in finalizing these rules.
2. Most States and Union Territories have already published their draft rules, signalling readiness for rollout.

4.Rationale for Reform

Removing Economic Hindrances – Free-market proponents have long argued that rigid archaic laws stifled economic growth and discouraged large-scale manufacturing.

Holistic Overhaul – The new Codes aim to fundamentally restructure

1. Worker–Employer relations.
2. Social Security nets (extending coverage).
3. Wage structures and emolument calculations.

Demographic Imperative

Rising Workforce – Approximately 12 million individuals enter the Indian workforce annually.

Job Creation Target – The Economic Survey 2023–24 highlights that India must create 78.5 lakh non-farm jobs every year until 2030 to absorb this influx.

Reforms are viewed as essential to create a flexible environment that encourages hiring.

5. Concerns and Criticisms

Exclusion of Unions – Labour unions argue that their apprehensions regarding the codes have remained unaddressed despite the long implementation delay.

Selective Recommendations – Unions allege the government selectively implemented recommendations from the Second National Commission on Labour (2002).

The accusation is that "Pro-Employer" recommendations were adopted while "Pro-Worker" safeguards were ignored.

Bias – Critics argue the Codes tilt heavily towards employer interests (e.g., easier hiring and firing) at the cost of worker job security.

6. The Changing Nature of Work

Global Instability – External factors such as wars, trade disruptions, and climate change necessitate higher productivity and agility in Indian agriculture and industry.

Emerging Sectors

Gig & Platform Economy – The rise of companies like Uber, Zomato, etc., has created a workforce that falls outside traditional definitions of "employee."

Artificial Intelligence (AI) – Automation and AI are reshaping job descriptions and skill requirements.

Need for Adaptation – The new legal framework must define work, wages, and social security in a way that covers these non-traditional sectors effectively.

7. The Need for Dialogue (Way Forward)

Reviving the Indian Labour Conference (ILC) – The ILC, the apex tripartite consultative committee, met 46 times between 1940 and 2015 but has not been convened since. There is an urgent need to hold the 47th Session of the ILC specifically to discuss these Codes.

Tripartite Consultation – Successful implementation relies on consensus between the three key stakeholders – The State (Government), Employers (Industry), and Employees (Unions). The Prime Minister had previously assured that reforms would follow broad-based consultations.

8. Conclusion

The success of the Labour Codes depends not just on their notification but on their acceptance by all stakeholders. As India navigates the challenges of the Gig economy, AI integration, and global economic uncertainty, the Government must ensure a transparent, inclusive, and tripartite dialogue. A balanced framework that protects workers while encouraging business investment is vital for long-term labour stability and economic productivity.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/labour-and-honour-on-the-four-labour-codes-the-path-ahead/article70318037.ece>

2. Justice Surya Kant Swears in as 53rd CJI, Article 240, And INS Mahe – (IE)

The Necessity of a National Counter-IED Policy

General Studies 3 – Internal Security **Topic** – Security Challenges and their Management in Border Areas; Linkages of Organized Crime with Terrorism.

1. Introduction

The recent investigation into the Red Fort blast, which revealed the usage of highly potent Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), has highlighted a critical gap in India's internal security apparatus. Asymmetric warfare has evolved, with IEDs becoming the weapon of choice for terrorists due to their low cost and high impact. This necessitates an urgent shift from reactive measures to a National Strategic Framework designed to prevent, detect, and neutralize IED threats comprehensively.

2. Background & Context

The Nature of the Weapon – IEDs are favoured by insurgent and terrorist groups because they are cost-effective, raw materials are easily available, and they inflict mass casualties without exposing the perpetrator to direct risk.

Geographic Spread – While historically prevalent in conflict zones like Jammu & Kashmir, Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas, and Punjab, the threat is increasingly permeating urban centres.

Composition – Terror modules utilize a mix of commercial and military-grade components, including –

1. Ammonium Nitrate Fuel Oil (ANFO) mixtures.
2. Military-grade explosives (e.g., RDX).
3. Shrapnel (metal balls/nails) to maximize lethality.

4. Chemical triggers.

3. IEDs Remain a Major Security Challenge

A. Easy Fabrication & Dual-Use Materials

Accessibility – Critical components like batteries, switches, and containers are innocuous commercial items available in any market.

Fertilizers – Ammonium Nitrate, a common agricultural fertilizer, is widely diverted and "cooked" to create explosive mixtures.

B. Low-Risk, High-Impact Asymmetry

Remote Operations – Attackers do not need to engage in direct confrontation with security forces; devices can be triggered remotely or via timers.

Psychological Impact – The randomness of blasts creates widespread panic and destabilizes public order.

C. Cross-Border State Sponsorship

Pakistan Factor – Intelligence indicates the supply of commercial explosives and detonators to terror groups from across the border.

Technological Shift – There is a rising use of Drones (UAVs) to smuggle "Sticky Bombs" (Magnetic IEDs) and high-grade explosives across the International Border (IB).

D. Urban Penetration – Attacks are no longer confined to jungles or borders. Incidents like the Rameshwaram Café blast (Bengaluru) and the Red Fort attempt signify a tactical shift toward targeting high-visibility civilian and heritage sites.

4. Current Institutional Mechanisms & Gaps

Existing Agencies

National Security Guard (NSG) – Operates the National Bomb Data Centre (NBDC), which maintains a repository of explosion signatures and conducts post-blast forensics.

PESO (Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation) – Mandated to regulate the manufacture, transport, and storage of commercial explosives and detonators.

Critical Gaps

Manpower – Severe shortage of trained monitoring personnel.

Intelligence – Lack of real-time coordination between state police and central agencies.

Pilferage – Significant leakage of explosives occurs during transportation from factories to mining sites due to poor tracking.

5. The Need for a National Counter-IED Policy

Requirement	Purpose & Objective
Unified National Framework	To integrate intelligence, technology, response, and regulation under a single doctrine rather than working in silos.
Border Strengthening	Specifically, to counter the "Drone-IED" nexus and seal smuggling routes used by couriers.
Technological Upgrades	Deployment of AI-based surveillance, explosive trace detectors (ETDs), and robotics for safe disposal.
Specialized Training	Enhancing the "First Response" capability of local police and disaster management units who usually arrive at the scene first.
Supply Chain Regulation	Strict control over Precursor Chemicals (like Ammonium Nitrate) to prevent leakage into terror networks.
Community Policing	Engaging local populations to identify and report suspicious activities, reducing local support networks for terrorists.
Forensic Database	Developing a data-driven approach to identify specific "signatures" of bomb-makers to attribute attacks to specific groups.

6. Way Forward

Doctrine Formulation – The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) must draft a dedicated Counter-IED Doctrine with standardized Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for all states.

Tech Deployment – Massive scaling up of scanners, frequency jammers, and Counter-Unmanned Aerial Systems (C-UAS) at sensitive locations.

Inter-Agency Coordination – Establishing a seamless information-sharing grid between NSG, NIA (National Investigation Agency), IB (Intelligence Bureau), and State Police.

Supply Chain Tracking – Implementing digital monitoring (GPS tracking/Geofencing) for vehicles transporting commercial explosives to prevent pilferage.

Indigenous R&D – Promoting research in Robotics (for bomb disposal) and advanced forensic technologies to reduce reliance on imports.

7. Conclusion

The evolving sophistication of IED attacks, fuelled by cross-border state support and new technologies like drones, demands a shift from reactive investigation to proactive prevention. A comprehensive National Counter-IED Policy is not just a regulatory need but a critical imperative to safeguard India's internal security architecture and protect civilian lives from the "invisible enemy."

Source - <https://indianexpress.com/article/upsc-current-affairs/upsc-key-surya-kant-53rd-cji-article-240-ins-mahe-10385144/>