



International Workers' Day

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Why in News

Every year, **1st May** is celebrated as the **International Workers' Day** and as **Labour Day** in different parts of the world to commemorate the contributions of workers and the historic labour movements.

- It is a day when the **International Labour Organisation** (ILO), nations, employers and workers from all over the world commit themselves towards the collective efforts of promoting decent work for all.
- In **1889**, the **Second International**, an **organisation created by socialist and labour parties**, declared that 1st May would be commemorated as International Workers' Day from then on.
- On 1st May **1904**, the **International Socialist Congress** at **Amsterdam, the Netherlands** called for the legal establishment of the **8-hour day for the class demands of the proletariat** and made it mandatory upon the proletarian organisations of all countries to stop work on this day.

Historical Perspective

- **USA**
 - The USA celebrates Labor day on the **first Monday of September, every year.** The USA recognised the day as a **federal holiday in 1894.**
 - **Canada also celebrates the Labour day on the same day as the US.**
 - Labor day was designated as a day in support of workers by trade unions and socialist groups in the memory of the **Haymarket affair of 1886 in Chicago, USA.** It gave the workers' movement a great impetus.
 - Haymarket Affair was a peaceful rally in support of workers which led to a violent clash with the police, leading to severe casualties. Those who died were hailed as **"Haymarket Martyrs"**.
 - Workers' rights violations, straining work hours, poor working conditions, low wages and child labour were the issues highlighted in the protest.
- **USSR**
 - The **Soviet Union** and the Eastern bloc nations started celebrating the Labor day **after the Russian Revolution, 1917.**
 - **Impact of Russian Revolution:** New ideologies such as **Marxism** and **Socialism** inspired many socialist and communist groups and they attracted peasants and workers and made them an integral part of national movement.
 - It became a **national holiday** during the **Cold War.**
- **India**
 - In India, Labor day was first celebrated in 1923, after the **Labour Kisan Party of Hindustan** initiated the celebrations and **Comrade Singaravelar** (Singaravelu Chettiar) continued the celebrations.
 - Comrade Singaravelar was **one of the leaders of the Self Respect movement in the Madras Presidency** and passed a resolution stating the government should allow everybody a national holiday on Labour Day.

Source: IE