



17th Asia Pacific Regional Meeting

For Prelims: Asia Pacific Regional Meeting (APRM), International Labour Organization (ILO), Labour Codes, E-Shram portal, Employees' State Insurance Scheme (ESIC)

For Mains: Framework Regarding Labours in India, Grey Areas Related to the Current Labour Reforms and the Suggestions

Why in News?

- Recently, the **17th Asia Pacific Regional Meeting (APRM)** of the [International Labour Organization \(ILO\)](#) was held in Singapore.

What are the Key Highlights of the Meeting?

- It brings together **representatives of governments, employers' and workers' organizations from Asia, the Pacific and the Arab states.**
- The **four key thematic areas** of the 17th APRM included:
 - **Integrated policy agenda for a human-centred recovery** that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient
 - **Institutional framework to support transitions** towards formality and decent work
 - Strong foundations for **social and employment protection and resilience**
 - **Revitalizing productivity growth and skills** for more and better jobs
- The meeting concluded with the launch of '**Singapore Statement**'.
 - The statement **represents a shared vision of the region's priorities for national action among the ILO constituents** and with ILO support in the coming years.
 - The statement highlights the **need to ratify ILO fundamental conventions and further strengthen the capacities of government, employer and worker representatives** to carry out effective social dialogue.
 - It calls for action to **close gender gaps and encourages ILO member countries to consider the ratification** and effective implementation of related international labour standards, **accelerate the transition from the informal to formal economy** as well as **strengthen governance frameworks** to protect the rights of migrant workers.
 - The Statement furthermore confirms the commitment of governments and social partners across the regions to engage in consultations towards the development of a **Global Social Justice Coalition**.
 - It also calls for a just transition that helps build **environmentally sustainable economies and societies** in the face of climate change.

What are the Points of Criticism for India?

- **Regrading Labour Policy:**
 - India's [new labour codes](#) violate the tripartite agreements between workers, employers and the government and give a free hand to employers as the **power of inspection** has been left with employers through the new codes.

▪ **Other Concerns:**

- **Declining productivity growth** has a **negative impact on workers, on the sustainability of enterprises** particularly [Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises \(MSMEs\)](#), on economies, and on communities.
- India has the **largest youth population in the world** and the country is observing a **technological and entrepreneurial boom** with start-ups and small businesses mushrooming across the country. However, **90% of the workforce belongs to the unorganised sector** and there are persistent challenges of low-paid jobs and poor working conditions.

What are the Suggestions for India?

▪ **New Social Contract:**

- A contract with governments and employers and particularly **at the national level**.
- It should be **based on the availability of decent jobs for all, respect of rights for all, fair wages** including minimum wage, **adequate and easily available social protection, respect for equality, inclusiveness** and **no forms of any discrimination**.

▪ **Enhancement of Productivity:**

- Enhancing productivity will be critical to economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work.
- **Recognising persisting skills challenges and that effective and demand-driven skills development** and lifelong learning benefit governments, employers and workers by advancing and promoting employability, sustainable development, productivity growth and economic prosperity.
 - **Digital skills, core skills, entrepreneurial skills** and **soft skills** should be better harnessed.

▪ **Identification of Workers in Unorganised Sector:**

- For ensuring the development of all, measures, like identifying workers in the unorganised sector and prioritising their needs **through platforms like the E-Shram portal** and **extending health coverage through Employees' State Insurance Scheme (ESIC)**, are measures to extend universal social security that is leading to reduction in inequality.
 - About **29 crore unorganised sector workers have been registered on the E-Shram portal** in the country, till date.

What is International Labour Organization?

- Established in 1919 by the **Treaty of Versailles** as an affiliated agency of the League of Nations.
- ILO is the **only tripartite U.N. agency** with government, employer, and worker representatives.
- It brings together governments, employers and workers of **187 member States**, to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men.
- **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland.
- **Reports:**
 - Global Wage Report
 - World Employment and Social Outlook
 - World Social Protection Report
 - Social Dialogue Report

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements: (2017)

1. The Factories Act, 1881 was passed with a view to fix the wages of industrial workers and to allow

the workers to form trade unions.

2. N.M. Lokhande was a pioneer in organizing the labour movement in British India.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- The first Indian Factories Act of 1881 only provided for the regulation of children below 12 years of age in factories and was meant to apply only to those factories employing 100 or more people and using mechanical power. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- Narayan Meghaji Lokhande was a co-worker of Mahatma Jotiba Phule and was a pioneer in organization of the labour movement during the colonial era. He organized various conferences and led a signature campaign for labour reforms. He was the first to work towards modern trade unionism in India. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- **Therefore, option B is the correct answer.**

Q2. In India, which one of the following compiles information on industrial disputes, closures, retrenchments and lay-offs in factories employing workers? (2022)

- (a) Central Statistics Office
- (b) Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade
- (c) Labour Bureau
- (d) National Technical Information System Manpower

Ans: (c)

Mains

Q. "Success of 'Make in India' programme depends on the success of 'Skill India' programme and radical labour reforms." Discuss with logical arguments. **(2015)**

Q. "Economic growth in the recent past has been led by increase in labour productivity." Explain this statement. Suggest the growth pattern that will lead to creation of more jobs without compromising labour productivity." **(2022)**

Source: TH